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Factors involved in high school completion and non-completion of Native Americans.

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FACTORS INVOLVED IN HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND NON-COMPLETION OF NATIVE AMERICANS

A Dissertation Presented

by

LORRIE STARR

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate my pursuit of higher education to my Granny, the first Native American and first women in Oklahoma to become a Pharmacist. The stories of my elders are carried and appreciated in my work; you are my inspiration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My committee has been dedicated in special circumstances and I thank and acknowledge Dr. Brunilda De León , Professor Michael Begay, and Professor Ernest Washington. Dr. De León has a special thanks due for continuing with me and running fast when we had to or just walking slowly when we needed to.

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS INVOLVED IN HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND NON-COMPLETION OF NATIVE AMERICANS

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This study is a survey of 60 Native Americans between 12 and 24 years of age. Thirty were graduates and thirty were non-graduates. The four sets of variables examined were: early pregnancy, drug and alcohol use, cultural values, and mentoring. The reliability of three variables (mentors, substance abuse, and cultural factors) was consistent with what might be expected in a random scale of 60 participants with a researcher-developed scale. It was, however, the category developed to address having or not having children that proved to be of the greatest statistical significance.

PREFACE

The educational experiences I recall as a young girl in Oklahoma are exemplary of my concerns. Our history courses began with no mention of the people living here prior to the "discovery" of our land. Rather, we were taught that American history began when Columbus "discovered" America.

In his 1981 inaugural address, President Reagan praised "the brave pioneers who tamed the empty wilderness." This was our newly elected President in his first inaugural speech; as an adolescent, I recall feeling shocked at the reference to an "empty wilderness." This was in direct conflict with the stories my elders passed down with such reverence from those who came before us. Yet, the most "powerful" man in the Western world thought differently. It seemed to me, though, that it was not the land that was "empty," but those who taught and led us who had an emptiness. This was evident to us even in our youth.

Could this type of early influence affect a Native person's approach to formal education? The inherent differences in values are central to the daunting assumption of assimilation, which remains an impossible task to most Native people. Walking in two worlds remains quite complex even today. Furthermore, misconceptions abound in the racist and inaccurate portrayal of Indians in America.

The contemporary reflection of Indians in our dominant culture receives little media coverage of past or present issues, save how they might affect the economy. It is most likely one would see an idyllic portrayal of a noble warrior on his horse, tear falling from his eye, or the rumored wealth handed to Indians like some birthright, and so forth, and as a result inaccurate stereotypes persist. Current events such as homicides

and gang-related violence are seldom reported. In fact, there is often more frequent media reporting of contemporary Native life in European countries.

Social science research is little different from the media. There is seldom research that includes any of the above-mentioned variables. It is this writer's intent to provide such a research project, examining the issues that surround the limited success of Native students in pursuing educational goals. The completion of high school is worthy of further exploration if educational options are to broaden toward any significant change within the Native American population. It is the hope of this writer to identify factors that can help increase high school completion.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Problem

The quandary of educational achievement for Native American people is both complex and enduring. As a total population, Native Americans are challenged by many unique circumstances. The young people have distinct and varied needs that set them apart from the community as a whole. Acculturation further fragments these communities. Yet, as the fastest growing segment of any minority population, they are nonetheless the most socially and economically deprived as well. Today we find over one-quarter of all Native American youth live in poverty.

Some factors that may be influential regarding educational and life choices include the following: early parenthood, pregnancy, substance abuse, family/mentor support, drug and alcohol addiction, violence in the home, single parent households, lack of secure identity and sense of tradition, level of acculturation, delinquency, and lack of value for education are all reported to contribute in ways that significantly impact physical, social, educational and psychological needs (Yates, 1992, Young, 1994). These are worth consideration as critical factors in the development of future research.

It is well documented that Native youth engage in substance abuse at much higher rates than other minority youth (Beavus, 1992, Gfellner & Hundley, 1995). Data suggests the co-morbidity of substance abuse with DSM-IV diagnosis in Native youth. Some of the areas outlined included that of disruptive behavior, conduct disorder, low

self esteem, increased truancy, rebellious behavior, and poor school performance (Greenbaum, et al., 1980). Of all of these issues, it is the problem of educational achievement that is the highest priority for educational research. It is the hope of this writer to identify factors that can help increase high school completion.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is the examination of deterrents and various psychosocial influences that may affect a Native American's pursuit of education. In this venue it will be considered a successful outcome if a person completes high school or GED program. This writer will gather data primarily from the area surrounding Phoenix, Arizona. Here it should be noted that within the Pima Maricopa Indian Nation residing at the edge of the Scottsdale city border, currently only one half of all tribal members in the community have completed high school or its equivalent. Data will be gathered from different areas that are frequented by Native Americans. These include a local Native owned and operated restaurant, the Phoenix Indian Medical Center lobby and outpatient areas, and two local Indian owned stores. The number of participants will be sixty males and females. Each participant will complete questionnaires indicating their beliefs and experiences regarding education. The participants range in age from 18 to 24 years of age. The problem addressed in this study is that of high school graduation.

1.3 Primary Research Question

The primary intention of this study is to survey Native American graduates and nongraduates in four broad categories of behavior and background that influence high school graduation.

1.3.1 Factor 1: Substance Abuse

This writer wishes to answer the question, Do drug, alcohol, or other forms of substance abuse influence academic achievment.

1.3.2 Factor 2: Early Parenthood

This writer seeks to determine if being a young parent who is involved with their child or children has an impact on high school completion.

1.3.3 Factor 3: Cultural Beliefs

Does strong traditional culture value conflict or support one's pursuit of education? To what degree does the extent of cultural assimilation and cultural identification affect educational choices?

1.3.4 Factor 4: Support System/Mentoring

And lastly, does having a mentor impact an individual's completion of high school? Does prior familial educational experience tend to influence a young person's completion of high school?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study investigates the significance of the above outlined factors as they relate to success in the completion of high school. Educational success will be measured by graduation from high school. The identification of problematic areas that prevent the success, or the failure, to graduate from high school is the primary purpose of this research project.

The current trend in high school completion cannot be effectively addressed without such data. At the Salt River Reservation alone, over one million dollars per year has been invested in a secondary school system which is only moderately successful at best. The student population is approximately 150. It is this writer's belief that the continual manifestation of behavioral and conduct problems is a symptom of a much more serious underlying community distress.

These challenges must be scientifically approached in order to effectively plan and measure interventions. However, over time it may be anticipated that these "at risk" students can be impacted in positive ways that assist not only in the completion of high school, but also in effective decision making strategies regarding the pursuit of college or vocational school.

The results of this study might provide valuable information as to the more efficient use of supportive resources that are readily available through both mental health and school services.

1.5 Future Research Implications

Implications for future research might include additional longitudinal studies tracking students who go to a college and/or graduate school. Currently there are only a few hundred Native American physicians and a similar number of Indian psychologists as well who are capable of guiding such research efforts. Additionally, allocation of tribal and governmental funding might best be addressed through such empirical data. Areas in need of programmatic change can be identified and better evaluated for effective service delivery as a result of said work. Lastly, the increase in providing meaningful services that could actually enrich Native people's lives and assist them in being healthier, more autonomous individuals.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction and Background

This reviews begins with a discussion of the difficulty of gathering research data on dropout rates of Native American students. This important social problem has proven to be difficult and intractable. The following factors are examined because they influence high school dropout rates: cultural discontinuity, substance abuse, family and mentoring, and early pregnancy. Over the past several decades the cultural continuity theory has been advanced often. It is not a very precise theory and it is used by several different disciplines. Included within this perspective is the work of John Ogbu who views Native Americans as within a caste status. The cultural continuity theory has had its critics, and these views are discussed.

Virtually all sources addressing the issue of high school completion and non-completion in North America agree that of all racial and ethnic groups, Native Americans consistently have the highest rates of school dropout. As stated by Bowker (1992):

> Historically, the dropout rates among American Indian youth have been the highest of any minority group in the country. In addition, Indian youth come from the poorest families, often live in substandard housing, have the shortest life expectancy, and are the most poorly nourished minority group in the nation. In 1970, Coombs reported that American Indians were "badly mis-educated" and as a result, were at the "bottom of the barrel" among the country's minorities. This situation has not changed dramatically in the past 20 years. (p. 4)

A review of the literature suggests that this situation has scarcely improved in the decade since Bowker's (1992) writing. The pervasive problem is further

complicated by a lack of reliable data on the exact rates of high school completion among Native American youth. In an extensive review of research, Swisher and Hoisch (1992) noted that American Indian/Alaska Native youth attend public schools, private schools, and schools (including boarding schools) under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). However, "very few studies had attempted to combine dropout rates across systems" (p. 8). There is also considerable variation in the rates of high school completion among different tribal cultures. For example, Eberhard (1989) reported the lowest dropout rates among Navajo youth in the 1980s, 27%, as opposed to an alarming 60% for all other tribes. Eberhard also observed discrepancies in the reporting of dropout data by different agencies. In fact, the Navajo Area Student Dropout Study was undertaken in 1986 in order to clarify information; at the time of the study, existing data on dropout rates among Navajo youth ranged from a "conservative 30%" to a "startling 95%" (Brandt, 1992, p. 49). These figures paralleled estimates for all Native American youth, which varied tremendously "depending on factors such as the definition of dropout, the method used for computing dropouts, and the adequacy of school data" (Brandt, 1992, p. 48). Even the most conservative figures are excessively high and the repeated inconsistencies highlight the complexity of the problem.

An additional problem in examining dropout rates among Native American youth is the fact that Native Americans of all tribal cultures represent less than 1% of the total U.S. population (Chavis, 1999). Jeffries, Nix, and Singer (2002) suggest that the lack of consensus on dropout rates within Native American communities may be due to national reports that ignore Native Americans because of their low population numbers. In addition, they note that the literature on the incidence of high school

dropout among "people of color" typically focuses on African American, Hispanics, and "others." Native Americans have a unique history that differs dramatically from that of all other racial and ethnic groups, and as Bowker (1992) and numerous other sources have observed, Native American youth face an array of socioeconomic conditions that have become associated with the label "at-risk." Despite these conditions, several authors emphasize that many young people show remarkable resilience, a phenomenon observed among youth of all ethnic minorities (which will be discussed later in this chapter). However, there is no question that, resilient youth notwithstanding, "statistics that are available reveal clear and consistent patterns; American Indians fare poorly in the nation's schools" (Wood & Clay, 1996, p. 40).

Compiling reliable numeric data is only a small part of an exceedingly complex issue. Several theories have been proposed to explain the consistently high rates of dropout among Native American students. St. Germaine (1995) has outlined the major theories, emphasizing that the diversity of tribal cultures, combined with significant contrasts between urban and rural communities, makes it especially difficult to generalize the proposed explanations. In general, the theories are rooted in the disciplines of their proponents. Each theory focuses on different elements that have been found to influence educational opportunities, experience, and success. As delineated by St. Germaine:

- Educational psychologists have traditionally accepted the "deficit theory," which postulates that students deemed disadvantaged require special help in mastering skills that will help them overcome the alleged deficits and succeed in school.

- Organizational theorists target the schools and schools systems and advocate major reform efforts to combat school failure.
- Sociologists and anthropologists focus on "powerful economic and political structures" that perpetuate inequities within society; this category includes critical theories who espouse an empowerment curriculum that makes classroom themes relevant to students' lives.
- Sociolinguists focus on teacher-learner interactions, which can be a source of miscommunication due to divergent cultural and linguistic preferences; they argue that teaching methods and curriculum must be adapted to reflect the preferences of the learner's cultural group.

St. Germaine (1995) notes that the cultural discontinuity hypothesis, a prominent framework for explaining the high rates of dropout among Native American youth, contains aspects of the last two theories. According to this hypothesis, children of ethnic minorities have been raised in a cultural milieu that is distinctly different from the majority culture and therefore, from the expectations and norms they are faced with at school. In this conflicting environment they are forced to choose between the values of the community or the values of the school, a "tragic paradox" in which success in one culture means failure within the other. As a result, some students may come to view school failure as a "tacit goal" that must be achieved in order to maintain their cultural identity, even at the cost of adult success in the greater society.

Although none of the sources that address cultural discontinuity dismiss the theory entirely, most consider it inadequate for addressing the full scope of factors that the influence the academic success of minority students (Brady, 1996; Ledlow, 1992;

Ogbu, 1978; Ogagaki, 2000; St. Germaine, 1995). Furthermore, sources disagree on what constitutes "culturally relevant" or "culturally sensitive" education. For example, several authors state that the traditional Indian values of interdependence and communality make students uncomfortable in a classroom setting that emphasizes individual achievement and competition (Garrett, 1995; Safran & Safran, 1994). However, Franklin and Waukechon (1995), who are involved in a Texas program to promote the academic achievement of Native American students, cite the idea that "American Indians loathe competition" as a stereotypical misconception that must be debunked.

In the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) Indian Education Project (begun in 1975), teachers and student support staff are given training to counteract prevalent myths and misconceptions, including several that appear in the professional literature. As further examples, Franklin and Waukechon (1995) include the belief that "All American Indian children are visual learners" and that "American Indian children do not make eye contact with authority figures." Indeed, these assumptions, and especially the assumption that American Indian children dislike competition, appear to be common beliefs among advocates of culturally sensitive education. However, the authors state that, "Although some of these stereotypes may have been true for a few tribal cultures (but not all), most American children in urban areas are far removed from such traditions or learning styles (Franklin & Waukechon, 1995, p. 187).

Although one may infer from the above statement that these preferences may still be prevalent among students on reservations, the higher school completion rates among Navajo youth reported by Ebhard (1989) have been attributed to their strong

sense of cultural identity, which undermines theories of cultural discontinuity. Rather than withdrawing from school due to cultural conflicts, rural Navajo youth most often leave school for practical reasons such as pregnancy or economic necessity (Dehyle, 1992). On some Indian reservations the rate of unemployment exceeds 80%. In her study of Navajo and Ute dropouts, Dehyle found that high school graduates were twice as likely to be employed as dropouts. However, there was minimal distinction in the types of jobs that they held; regardless of educational status, most were employed in service sector jobs characterized by low pay, poor opportunities for advancement, and job insecurity. Young men and women observed (realistically) that a high school degree might have minimal impact on their chances for future advancement.

Although cultural discontinuity offers at best a partial explanation for school withdrawal within the context of pervasive socioeconomic stressors, the historic disrespect for tribal cultures by the U.S. government is an undeniable factor in the school experience of Native American youth. In 1879, Richard H. Pratt founded one of the first Indian boarding schools, with the slogan, "Kill the Indian and save the man!" As interpreted by Garrett (1995), "he could not have grasped the depth and breadth of wisdom offered by Native American values and practices." What Pratt did understand was "one fundamental principle underlying the idea of assimilation; break the spirit of a people and you have broken the people" (p. 187).

Garrett (1995) emphasizes that "the spirit of the people has endured," although there are still many cultural conflicts with the dominant society. Whether or not one agrees that cultural conflicts take the form of communication or learning style

differences, racism and prejudice on the part of non-Indian teachers and classmates is a pervasive theme in the literature. According to Locust (1988):

> Discrimination against persons because of their beliefs is the most insidious kind of injustice. Ridicule of one's spiritual beliefs or cultural teachings wounds the spirit, leaving anger and hurt that may be masked by a proud silence. American Indians' experience and discrimination in abundance for the sake of their traditional beliefs, especially when their beliefs conflict with the dominant culture's educational systems. (p. 315)

Numerous sources refer to the legacy of trauma and alienation left by systematic efforts to obliterate Native American tribal cultures. The practice of educating Indian youth in boarding schools with the goal of assimilation resulted in "subtractive bilingualism," whereby young people were deprived of the wisdom and language of their native cultures while still marginalized by the dominant society (Lipka, 2002). Many became alienated and dropped out while those who remained enjoyed few of the presumed benefits of an Anglo education. Boarding schools disrupted the extended family networks of tribal cultures through which values had traditionally been transmitted (Garrett, 1995; Kawamoto, 2001). Children were routinely separated from their families and raised in an environment with no role models for good parenting (Clarke, 2002). Poor parenting skills combined with the stresses of poverty and persistent exposure to racism are significant contributors to child abuse and domestic violence (DeBruyn, Chino, Serna, & Fullerton-Gleason, 2001; Horejsi, Craig, & Pablo, 1992). Further exacerbating this problem is the well-documented incidence of alcoholism in Native American communities, often regarded as a legacy of the European colonization of North America (Beauvais, 1998; Frank, Moore, & Ames, 2000). The result is often an inexorable cycle of violence and substance abuse (DeBruyn et al., 2001; Kawamoto, 2001; Manson, 2000).

Manson (2000) observes that while Native American children and adolescents are at high risk for psychosocial problems, they have minimal access to mental health services. Although treatment may be free under the Indian Health Service (IHS), the number of IHS mental health professionals trained to work with children and adolescents stands at less than 10% of the recommended number. According to data reported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Native American youth aged 12-17 have more than twice the rate of illicit drug use than the national average (22.2% compared to 9.7%), have higher rates of binge drinking and heavy alcohol use, are more than twice as likely to smoke cigarettes, and are more likely to get into gang fights or fights at school or at work than the national average (Clarke, 2002). Clarke emphasizes that the plethora of factors that place Native American youth "at risk" must be viewed within the context of social and structural factors.

The passage of the Indian Education Act of 1972 (PL 92-318) and the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (PL 93-38) marked a "new era in Indian education," in which efforts have been made to incorporate Native languages and cultures in education (Lipka, 2002). Boarding schools today are no longer the vehicles for assimilation and alienation that they were in the past. Roughly half are located in Indian communities and all are in close proximity to the communities (Chavis, 1999). To mental health professionals, the shelter of a residential setting and the services offered by BIA boarding schools may have protective value for Native American youth at high risk for depression, substance abuse, and suicide (Dinges & Duong-Tran, 1993). For those at risk for school failure due to institutionalized racism

in public schools, boarding schools offer a refuge where they can focus on academic achievement while formulating a positive cultural identity (Chavis, 1999).

The irony, whereby boarding schools have gone from being a means of assimilating American Indian students by annihilating all elements of their native cultures, to a place where they can reaffirm their cultural identity while preparing themselves for success within the greater society, is symbolic of the complexity surrounding the academic success or failure of Native American students. While their small population numbers have often relegated Native American students to the status of "others" in ethnic research, their unique history demands that the education of Native American children be examined in depth within the context of sociohistorical and structural factors. The following sections in this chapter will address the factors that influence high school completion or non-completion, touching on each of the theories outlined by St. Germaine (1995).

2.2 Institutional Racism and Identity

In recent years, the term "Native American" has come to be viewed as more "politically correct" than the traditional label "American Indian" for describing the indigenous populations of North America. Yellow Bird (1999) states that, "neither term has been without controversy, and no clear consensus exists on which label is most preferable" (p. 21). According to a 1995 survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 49.8% of respondents preferred "American Indian," 37.5% preferred "Native American," 5.7% reported no preference, 3.7% preferred some other term, and 3.5% identified as "Alaska Native." Many individuals, both within and outside of Native

communities, continue to use American Indian because the term is familiar. Some view the term politically; American Indian is a legal term used in the allocation of resources and land. Native American is often adopted for purely practical purposes; the growing numbers of immigrants from India make it confusing to use the term "Indians" to denote two distinct population groups. (The terms Native American and American Indian are used in this report for convenience.)

In 1998, students at the University of Kansas culminated more than a year of debate by changing the name of their student organization from the Native American Student Association to the First Nations Student Association. According to Yellow Bird (1999), "The change was prompted by students' desire to counter imposed racial labels and to promote notions of inclusiveness, sovereignty, accuracy, and identity empowerment among First Nations students" (p. 2). Concurrently, the title "Indigenous Nations Studies" was selected over "American Indian" or "Native American" studies for a new graduate program. Yellow Bird prefers the term Indigenous Peoples because it accurately reflects the diversity of tribal cultures, whereas American Indian and Native American reflect a "monolithic identity." In fact, the Indigenous Peoples of North America represent more than 550 different tribes, including 223 Alaska Native villages. (Interestingly, the term "indigenous peoples" is commonly used to denote the native populations of Australia and South America, and to a lesser extent, Canada, although it is almost never used in the U.S.)

Although the dynamics involved in the selection of an appropriate label for indigenous populations is beyond the scope of this study, of particular relevance is that the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* suggests that many people

prefer Native American over American Indian "because it avoids the stereotypes that are often associated with phrases such as 'wild Indians' or 'cowboys and Indians'" (Yellow Bird, 1999, p. 3). Terms like "savages," "redskins," and "squaw" have been used as derogatory labels for persons of Native American descent, and "Indian" itself has been used as an insult, implying inferior status or intelligence. Furthermore, the use of the Indian label as a marketing device used to sell products (and of particular controversy, sports teams) is considered demeaning of Native American cultures.

In exploring the conditions that underlie psychosocial distress in Native American families, Horejsi and colleagues (1992) state categorically that, "Typically, Native American children begin to experience racism and discrimination early in life" (p. 332). Like Locust (1988), they view devaluing tribal customs as an insidious form of discrimination, and like Yellow Bird (1999), they emphasize the way emotionally charged labels can be used to reinforce stereotypes:

> On the playground the Native American child may be called "drunken Indian" or "wagon burner." Sooner or later the child hears that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian." Some Native American children may incorporate these expressions of bigotry into their self-concept, giving rise to feelings of inferiority. To escape this pain, the children may withdraw or act out. (p. 332)

Avoiding school where they are confronted daily with the dominant society is one of the potential consequences of persistent exposure to racism. Others include depression, suicidal tendencies, alcohol and drug abuse, violence, promiscuity "and other problems that are frequently rooted in low self-esteem" (Horejsi et al., 1992, p. 332). Indeed, these problems appear prominently in the literature on Native American youth (e.g., Dinges & Duong-Tran, 1993; Clarke, 2002; Manson, 2000). Further compounding the problem is the suspicion and distrust of individuals from the dominant

culture, including social service and mental health professionals, evolving from personal experiences of prejudice and discrimination, which undermine efforts to help Native Americans resolve personal and family problems (Horejsi et al., 1992).

Many Native Americans report overt displays of racism by teachers in public schools. Discrimination by public school teachers emerged as a prominent theme in Chavis' (1999) survey of adults aged 26-37, who had transferred from public schools to off-reservation BIA boarding schools. As described by a White Mountain Apache who had transferred after attending public school in Arizona:

> When I was in the white school [public school], they didn't seem to think that much of Indians. We were stuck in C and D classes. Some said C meant "Colored" and D meant "Dumb." When I was going to the white school, the way classes were set up was racist. It's not a good feeling when all the dark students are placed in the slow classes. My sister had higher test scores than many of the whites, but we were still in the C and D classes. The Indian schools [boarding schools] were different. The teachers made us feel much better about ourselves. (Chavis, 1999, p. 40)

Other respondents reported similar experiences, which led them to choose boarding schools. Another student from Arizona, a San Carlos Apache/Papago, related:

> It is hard to understand some teachers. A teacher in the public schools became upset with me and said, "I thought you Indians were taught to respect your elders; why don't you show me any respect?" She didn't realize that our Indian elders *show respect for us* [emphasis added]. Teachers there [in public school] already had their minds set on what type of student I was before they even got to know me. In the boarding schools you are with all Indian students and that makes a difference. (Chavis, 1999, p. 39)

An interesting finding in Chavis' (1999) study is that the majority of teachers in the boarding schools were not Native Americans. Despite this, the respondents routinely referred to the boarding high schools as "Indian schools" and the public schools as "white schools." The distinction appeared to lie in both the presence of

Indian peers and the attitudes of the teachers. A majority regarded their teachers to be accepting of them as American Indians and as individuals. Roughly three-quarters (74.1%) related that their teachers encouraged them to pursue new areas of interest and 72.1% said they were provided the opportunity to do so. Most felt the teachers respected their ability to make personal decisions and choose their course of study while at the same time ensuring that they took the courses needed to earn a high school degree. The vast majority agreed that their teachers were concerned about them.

Of the participants in Chavis' (1999) study, 64% completed high school and 16% enrolled in college or vocational school after graduating from boarding school. It is noteworthy that 82% said they spoke their tribal language and 93% continued to participate in tribal culture. Slightly more than two-thirds (68%) were employed at the time of the study. Females in the study were more likely to have graduated from high school than males. Research is inconsistent on gender differences in graduation, with some sources proposing that Native American females are more likely to graduate while others predict the reverse. A 1980 study reported that Native American females had the highest rates of school dropout for any population subgroup (Bowker, 1992). Eberhard (1989) found no gender differences in the dropout rate for urban American Indian students.

Chavis (1999) focused on Native Americans who elected to change schools rather than drop out (although a significant proportion did drop out of boarding school). Dehyle (1992) found strong evidence of institutional racism in the experiences of Navajo and Ute high school dropouts; in fact, some teachers in the ethnographic study openly expressed racist attitudes. According to one Navajo youth:

> The way I see it seems like the whites don't want to get involved with the Indians. They think we're bad. We drink. Our families drink. Dirty. Ugly. And the teachers don't want to help us. They say, "Oh, no, there is another Indian asking a question" because they don't understand. So we stopped asking questions. (Dehyle, 1992, p. 24)

Whereas the overwhelming majority of individuals interviewed by Chavis (1999) felt that their boarding school teachers cared about them, nearly half of the Navajo and Ute dropouts (ranging in age from 14 to 26) surveyed by Dehyle (1992) felt the reverse was true. This finding is similar to that reported by Coladarci (1983), in which more than a third of Native American dropouts in Montana reported that their teachers did not care about them or provide them assistance in school. In all three studies, the perception of having a teacher who "cares" was considered very important. To a degree this perception was related to teachers' offering help with school work; more often the sense that a teacher was uncaring was taken to mean that the teachers was prejudiced against Indian students. In some cases, teachers' attempts to encourage students to succeed were misguided, instead reflecting stereotypes about Indians. For example, one teacher tried to promote academic success by telling his students, "You all listen, you aren't going to be on welfare like all the other Navajos" (Dehyle, 1992, p. 31). Although the teacher may have been well intentioned, the implication that "all Navajos are on welfare" clearly reflects a lack of cultural sensitivity.

Several teachers explicitly expressed negative feelings for their Native American students; in particular, they disliked the Ute students, whom they viewed as "aggressive," followed by students from a Navajo border community who were described as "defiant." These teachers preferred Navajo reservation youth who "were real nice and quiet in class" and "did their work and what you told them to do" (Dehyle,

1992, p. 31). In contrast, teachers who were genuinely concerned with their students tried to encourage the Navajo students to be more assertive and "stand up" for themselves when confronted by Anglo students. A significant finding was that while some teachers were caring and tried to involve their students, they still elicited suspicion rather than trust from Indian students, who viewed them only as outsiders whose goal was to assimilate them and make them become "non-Indian."

The experiences of many Native American students clearly fit the pattern of persistent discrimination described by Horejsi et al. (1992). Indeed, some teachers attributed the school failure of their Native American students to internalized racism resulting from unrelenting exposure to the prejudice of the white community (Dehyle, 1992). Some students feared entering high school because of stories they heard from peers, siblings, and other family members about the discrimination they would encounter from teachers. To arm themselves against prejudice, many students formed groups for support and many immersed themselves in their native culture as a source of inner strength. On the other hand, some students found it an enriching experience to attend multicultural schools. Dehyle stresses that, "Just as most Indian students were not dropouts, most also did not feel overwhelmingly discriminated against" (p. 35). For many dropouts, however, their own perceptions of prejudice were heightened by a cultural legacy of oppression by whites and the reported experiences of significant others.

2.3 Exploring the Cultural Discontinuity Hypothesis

Eberhard (1989) found that despite the persistently high rates of school dropout, "Indian parents regard education highly. They speak with pride when their young ones receive honors. Their children are capable of learning, achieving, and becoming successful in society" (p. 39). In fact, Native American students appear to perform at an average or superior level until fourth grade when their academic performance declines (Safran & Safran, 1994). By 10th grade many are performing up to three grade levels below their non-Native peers. Most sources agree that low-self esteem, poor self-concepts, and alienation play a role in this phenomenon, and that it relates to a history of cultural, political, and economic oppression. However, there is considerable controversy on the relative influence of cultural incongruity in the classroom over the structural barriers created by sociohistorical oppression.

Ledlow (1992) has been the most outspoken critic of cultural discontinuity as the primary explanation for school dropout among Native American youth. As interpreted by Ledlow, "The cultural discontinuity hypothesis assumes that culturally based differences in the communication styles of the minority students' home and the Anglo culture of the school leads to conflicts, misunderstandings, and ultimately, failure for those students" (p. 23). Proponents of this theory argue that making the school experience culturally relevant will facilitate the academic success of minority students.

There is no question that cultural incongruities can cause misunderstandings that undermine student success. For example, Locust (1988) focused on cultural attitudes toward wellness and disease that influence absenteeism and differ dramatically between Anglo and Native cultures. Causes of absenteeism among Native American students

may run distinctly counter to those deemed acceptable by the school system. In Native American cultures, which universally accept the unity of mind, body, and spirit, a spiritual illness is considered far more serious than a physical illness. However, spiritual sickness is not recognized as a valid concept or cause of absence within the conventional school system. Furthermore, it is believed that a person's spiritual sickness can infect the group, thereby requiring a collective effort to return the infected individual to a state of wellness or harmony. The child may be kept from school to assist the family or tribal clan, which becomes a source of conflict between the clan and the school system. At the same time, the common physical symptoms that schools generally consider valid reasons for a child's absence (e.g., cold symptoms, upset stomach or nausea) are considered to be minor inconveniences by many Native American families and no reason to stay home. To school officials who do not understand tribal cultures, parents are viewed as irresponsible when children arrive at school with recognizable physical symptoms, and equally irresponsible when children are kept home due to causes that are unsanctioned by Western medicine.

In a culture where holidays are based on Judeo-Christian traditions, children may also be penalized for being absent from classes to participate in tribal rituals. Locust (1988) considers the failure of school officials to recognize the importance of traditional Native American tribal ceremonies a blatant form of discrimination and denial of religious freedom. In some instances culturally sensitive school boards have formally recognized tribal holidays; for example, in 1986, the Tucson Unified School District changed its attendance policy so that Yaqui children (the focus of the reform) and children of other tribal cultures are excused from school for religious celebrations.

However, Locust concedes that, "Unfortunately, this bold step toward religious equality in the educational system is an exception, not the norm, for school boards" (p. 327).

School officials may also misinterpret parents' behavior as uncaring or apathetic when, in fact, it is not. Anticipating that a call to visit the school means their child is in trouble, some Native American parents may refuse to go because they believe the negative confrontation will cause disharmony, which depletes spiritual energy and may cause illness (Locust, 1988). Instead of confronting the teacher, they prefer to counsel the child at home; thus they are dealing with the problem in a way that respects their culture but is criticized by the school. The anticipated disharmony may emanate from the sense that the school is insensitive to tribal customs. This attitude was expressed by many students and parents surveyed by Eberhard (1989). One Indian leader stated that the "sharing and the caring" is absent from schools (p. 39).

To Locust (1988), the emphasis placed on the group over the individual in tribal cultures creates conflicts not because it contrasts with conventional classroom practices but because the needs of the family may take precedence over the rules of the dominant culture. Young girls may stay home from school to baby-sit younger siblings because both parents must work to support the family and there is no child care available. Their brothers may be expected to work to contribute to the family income; however, with no work available they may deem it acceptable to steal because the needs of the family group come first. Locust notes that Indian children sometimes go hungry rather than ask for money for food because they feel it is selfish to put their own needs over the group. Poor nourishment undermines learning and may be interpreted as a sign of parental neglect, but this is not necessarily the case. Locust also states that some Indian

students refuse to participate in sports that require them to purchase uniforms because the money might be better used for family resources.

In fact, Franklin and Waukechon (1995) related the case of a 16-year old girl of American Indian and Mexican American heritage who dropped out of school for one semester but subsequently entered an alternative school run by the Austin ISD. She turned to the American Indian Education Project for help when she could not afford to buy the requisite gym uniform but was penalized for not "dressing out" in class. The Project worked with the school to obtain the required uniform and the girl became actively involved in the Project, exploring her Seminole and Choctaw heritage. She married while still in school and dropped out when she became pregnant (a common cause of dropout among Native American girls, which will be discussed later). However, she re-enrolled in an alternative school, where she excelled in mathematics and became a mentor to a younger student. Mentoring is an integral part of the American Indian Educational Project, simultaneously fostering academic achievement and positive cultural identity.

Although cultural incongruities undoubtedly play a role in the miscommunication between home and school, the above examples clearly indicate that economic disadvantage underlies much of the conflict between Native American students' home and school lives. In addition, the disruption of the extended family networks of tribal cultures heightens the perception by school officials that students are left to "run wild" by neglectful parents. Traditionally, adolescents have been awarded adult status and allowed to govern their own behavior; however, they had first been socialized into the tribal values. Without the benefit of traditional teachings, "This

creates freedom without knowledge of how to accept responsibility, and consequently, Indian children are called 'delinquent,' 'wild,' and 'uncontrolled' by a social system that created this situation for them" (Locust, 1988, p. 328). Horesji et al. (1993) emphasize that the extended family can serve as an immense source of support, especially when a biological parent is unable to fulfill a supportive role. They also note, however, that it is possible for an entire extended family to be dysfunctional, especially when there is a problem with alcoholism.

In the Minnesota Student Survey, which included a substantial proportion of Native American students, Native students were twice as likely as black students and three times as likely as white students to have dropped out of high school by age 17 (Machamer & Gruber, 1998). Overall, Native American students reported weaker family ties and educational commitment than their non-Native peers and engaged in more risk-taking behaviors, a common finding in research (Clarke, 2002). For all ethnic groups there was a relationship for these three variables, and Machamer and Gruber emphasize that there was a large amount of variability within each ethnic group. The authors attribute the higher at-risk status of the Indian students to the loss of tribal culture, and with it, the socialization benefits of the extended family, thus concurring with Locust (1998) as well as to discrepancies between Native American values and those of the dominant culture.

Dehyle (1992) observed conflicts that resulted from the emphasis on adolescent autonomy in Navajo families as opposed to the Anglo culture's belief in adult supervision for children and adolescents. Respect for the independence of adolescents was often interpreted by white families as "lack of support" or "neglect."

Unintentionally, the Navajo parents' belief in "non-interference" could have a negative impact on their children's high school completion, since they often refused to intervene with a child's decision to drop out. The same is true of parents in other tribal cultures (Garrett, 1995). At the same time, Dehyle (1992) reported dropout decisions were most frequently motivated by economic factors: a family that needed their assistance with work or a realistic appraisal that a high school degree might have no effect on their future prospects for employment.

In her criticism of the cultural discontinuity hypothesis, Ledlow (1992) cites Dehyle (1992) as one of the few researchers whose exploration of Native American high school non-completion extended beyond the venues of home and school to encompass the broader economic and political environment of the larger community. In view of the research examined for the present study, Ledlow is somewhat short-sighted in proposing that the factors underlying the high dropout rates among Native American youth may not differ significantly from those of other minorities. Unquestionably, a degree of cultural discontinuity is not unique to the situation of Native Americans, nor is the rampant poverty, discrimination, substance abuse, and limited employment opportunities noted by numerous sources. However, the herding of indigenous peoples onto reservations, the systematic attempts to suppress tribal cultures, and the sociocultural context in which alcohol was introduced into tribal life is unparalleled, in the same way that the legacy of slavery in the lives of African Americans is unparalleled in the experience other minorities. Indeed, it is precisely the impact of these sociohistorical factors that Ogbu (1978) has addressed.

Ogbu (1978) acknowledges that not all minority groups have fared poorly in school despite shared experiences of prejudice and discrimination. As a framework for analyzing the phenomenon of academic failure among certain minorities, Ogbu divided minority groups into autonomous, immigrant, and caste-like minorities. Autonomous minorities include the Jews and the Amish, who retain their unique cultural identity and are economically independent. Immigrants are voluntary arrivals who view their new homeland as a source of new opportunities; although they may experience discrimination in the U.S., they generally perceive themselves to be better off economically or politically than they were in their native land. Native Americans and African Americans fall into the third category, caste-like minorities. They have been incorporated into American society involuntarily and have been subject to persistent, institutionalized discrimination that perpetuates an inferior status. Whereas immigrant minorities have traditionally been imbued with the belief that effort and hard work in school will result in economic success, caste-like minorities have become disillusioned by the realities of pervasive poverty and unemployment. In place of the belief that academic success will translate into economic success, castelike minorities may define success in opposition to the dominant culture. Thus, academic success is equated with cultural failure, or "acting White."

Dehyle (1992) found some support for Ogbu's theory among Navajo youth. Teasing is a traditional Navajo method of social control, and students who were high achievers in school or who went away to school were teased for thinking themselves "better" than others or teased about forgetting their native language or culture. Observing this phenomenon, white teachers sometimes used it to blame Navajo

students' school failure on peers that "pulled them down." In response to potential rejection by peers, some successful Navajo students did abandon their schoolwork. Dehyle suggests that the teasing reflected a desire to maintain cultural integrity, which was threatened by the very real prospect that students who were academically successful would leave the reservation in search of economic opportunities that were not available on the reservation or the surrounding community.

Additional support for Ogbu's theory may be found in the fact that the Ute, who came from "the most disjointed and fractured culture," were most likely to perceive schools as "either a threat to their identity or irrelevant to their lives" (Dehyle, 1992, p. 45). Their dropout rate was an alarming 64%, few had attended college, and unemployment on the Ute reservation was over 80%. None of the Ute students spoke Ute and few came from families in which traditional values were handed down. Consequently, their behavior exemplified the culture of opposition that Ogbu (1978) attributed to caste-like minorities. In contrast, the Navajo from the close-knit, traditional community of Navajo Mesa were least likely to rebel against school norms and based their decisions to continue or leave school primarily on practical concerns.

Okagaki (2001) proposed a *Triarchic Model of School Achievement* for minority students that encompasses elements of virtually all the theories outlined by St.. Germaine (1995). Exemplifying the organizational perspective, Okagaki contends that the structure of the conventional teacher-centered classroom (e.g., compulsory attendance, public displays of achievement, competition for few rewards) has features that can potentially evoke resistance from *all* children. However, this potential for alienation is exacerbated when elements of the classroom culture conflict with the

values the student is taught at home. This perspective supports the cultural discontinuity hypothesis, however, like Ogbu (1978), Okagapi argues that cultural incompatibility cannot account for why some minorities do well in school while others do not. An important feature of the Triarchic Model is the role of the family in promoting academic motivation. Of special relevance to the present study, Okagapi (2001) proposes that, "some minority students may underachieve in school even though they and their parents believe that education is important on a general or abstract level, because they do not believe that education is relevant in some personal, pragmatic way" (p. 16). Indeed, research suggests that this is true for many Native American students (Brandt, 1992; Dehyle, 1992; Eberhard, 1989).

Especially important, the Triarchic Model recognizes the role of "the larger societal context and historical backgrounds of ethnic groups" as critical to a comprehensive model for examining the academic success or failure of cultural minorities (Okagaki, 2001, p. 16). The Triarchic Model recognizes the importance of the form and perceived function of school, the family's cultural heritage and beliefs about education, as well as the unique characteristics of each child, in understanding academic success. With respect to the child's characteristics, Okagaki states that educators must reflect on how stereotypes are invoked in the educational setting and how they can negatively impact student performance. The author proposes such strategies as "optimistic" student-teacher relationships, mentoring, role modeling, and establishing communication with parents, which are consistent with the practices of the American Indian Education Project (Franklin & Waukechon, 1995).

Lin (1990) found a seemingly paradoxical effect in a study of Native American college students; that is, students of less educated parents did better academically than those of more education parents. While this finding runs counter to most research, the author attributes it to the more traditional values of the less educated parents. Their traditional values orientation included a strong work ethic and task orientation, thus they instilled their children with strong motivation for achievement. Using Obbu's (1978) theory, this suggests that the traditional families shared the attitudes of immigrant minorities rather than caste-like minorities, perceiving effort and hard work as conditions for future success.

In analyzing the problem of high school dropout among Native American youth in Canada, Brady (1996) agreed that while there is support for some aspects of the cultural discontinuity hypothesis, it is inadequate for explaining a complex phenomenon. Brady's reasons for rejecting the theory as anything more than a partial explanation for high rates of school withdrawal among indigenous students can be extended to the U.S.: 1) the theory cannot explain why the tendency to dropout varies widely among Native students according to the economic circumstances of their families, 2) it does not explain why dropout rates vary widely from one Native community to another, and 3) it does not explain why the school experiences of Native dropouts are so similar to those of their non-Native counterparts.

Brady's (1996) primary focus is on the relationship between socioeconomic status and tracking within the school system, a focus of criticism among school reformers in the U.S. as well. In a study conducted by the Toronto Board of Education, the overwhelming majority of students from the highest socioeconomic level (92%) and

the second highest socioeconomic level (87.9%) were in the most advanced program. States Brady, "Given the socioeconomic status of many Native people in Canada, it is not surprising to note that a disproportionately large proportion of Native youth are consigned by the secondary school system to non-academic streams" (p. 16). The author notes that a second study confirmed that Native youth are often relegated to basic and general level courses, adding that the practice is not confined to Toronto. One might add that the practice is not limited to Canada. They parallel U.S. studies, which consistently report an over-representation of minority and low-income students (categories that overlap) in non-academic tracks.

Brady (1996) also observed that institutional rules are often enforced selectively for students of different social classes; low-income students reported being targeted for punishment or given harsher penalties for small infractions. For Native students, class discrimination is compounded with institutional racism. In sum, Brady concluded that, "It is entirely plausible to suggest that while being a member of a visible minority does play a significant role in the decision to drop out, being part of a larger cultural minority (the socioeconomically disadvantaged), plays an equal, if not greater role in the creation of this phenomenon" (p. 19).

The study of Wood and Clay (1996) found that being a "visible minority" does, in fact, influence academic success. In their study of 352 American Indian and 1,592 white Oklahoma high school students they found, somewhat unexpectedly that, controlling for other factors, a higher percentage of Indian blood had a negative impact on academic attainment. The only viable explanation for this effect is that students with more Indian blood are more easily identifiable, and thus might be more subject to

prejudice and discrimination. They might also be more vulnerable to the effects of internalized racism when formulating "race-awareness" in early childhood.

Consistent with critics of the cultural discontinuity hypothesis (i.e., Ledlow, 1992; Ogbu, 1978), Wood and Clay (1996) found that attachment to Indian culture had no significant influence on academic achievement. However, they did find that stronger identification with Anglo values predicted higher academic achievement, giving some support to the theory. (Most studies find some support for cultural discontinuity, although other factors typically override its importance.) Perceived structural barriers had a stronger effect on academic achievement that ethnicity per se, in support of Ogbu's assertion that perceived barriers to upward mobility are key to determining academic motivation among minority students.

Jeffries et al. (2002) focused on three students enrolled in Spotted Eagle High School, an alternative school in the Milwaukee Public School system, to explore the factors that underlie the decision of Native American students to choose an alternative school. The majority of students at Spotted Eagle have dropped out of conventional high schools. A common theme was overwhelming poverty; one student had been teased about her clothes, while another struggled to earn money for clothes and other necessities. The third student, who had been in and out of numerous foster homes, reported having to work in order to eat. Eventually, he dropped out of school completely, while the other two students graduated. Overall, poverty had the most devastating impact on the three students' educational status. In support of the Triarchic Model of Okagaki (2001), the second most influential factor was parental attitudes toward education. The female graduate was raised by a single mother who had dropped

out of school, a factor that may have driven her encouragement of her daughter to finish school. Similarly, the male graduate was raised by two parents who had left school, but who continually encouraged him to succeed. The third student, who was returned to an irresponsible mother after unstable foster home placements, received no support for completing high school.

Jeffries et al. (2002) support the cultural discontinuity hypothesis, describing Spotted Eagle as a "model school" where, "Educators…operate on the assumption that cultural discontinuities do exist, and they enable success by infusing American Indian art, literature, and values into the curriculum and imparting the curriculum in a relaxed, caring, and democratic environment" (p. 45). The American Indian Education Project was created to help Native American students develop a strong cultural identity and takes similar steps to ensure that students learn the significance of their cultural heritage (Franklin & Waukechon, 1995). Okagaki (2001) would argue that a "relaxed, caring, and democratic environment" is more conducive to learning for all students than the traditional American classroom. At the same time, Jeffries and colleagues acknowledged that poverty posed the greatest risk to the school completion of the three alternative school students. They noted that without appropriate intervention, students who face immediate economic concerns are likely to drop out of school.

The importance of family influences on high school completion is highlighted by findings from the Navajo Area Student Dropout Study (Brandt, 1992). The overwhelming majority of respondents who finished high school reported that parents and other family members encouraged them to stay in school (82%), compared to 56.7% of dropouts who said they were encouraged to stay in school. In addition, a

higher proportion of graduates stated that their parents or caregivers were always involved in school activities (12.6%) compared to 7.5% for school dropouts. Conversely, 24.8% of dropouts said parents or caregivers were never involved in school activities, as opposed to 15.1% for school persisters. Persisters were also more likely to live within walking distance of the school or have family members who drove them to school; in contrast, 60.8% of dropouts rode the bus to school and only a scant 4.1% walked. The precise role of transportation in predicting school dropout is uncertain, although transportation problems seemed to relate to absenteeism, a significant first step toward dropping out.

Although the differences between school completers and school dropouts were not dramatic, several factors were associated with successful high school completion. Most important were family support and encouragement, communication with the school and involvement in school activities, employed mothers and fathers, and two-parent homes (Brandt, 1992). Additionally, children from homes with no substance abuse problems were more likely to persist, as was parental assistance in getting to school, and learning English at home before entering school. It is noteworthy that most of the school surveyed had no dropout prevention programs; yet the majority of respondents expressed support for the value of education and said they desired to finish high school even if it took them a longer than usual time. Only 8.8% of the dropouts said they never intended to return to school; the overwhelming majority said they either expected to (46%) or might return (45.1%) to school. Based on these intentions, the implementation of dropout programs, or the availability of alternative schools, could potentially have a significant impact on the graduation rates of Native American youth.

Family influence also emerged as a predictor of school success in a study of Native American women (Bowker, 1992). Although Bowker found remarkable similarities in the experiences and backgrounds of school completers and non-completers, high school graduates tended to come from families that set limits for behavior, where parents valued education and were frequently well-educated themselves, and were involved in their daughter's lives in and out of school. The absence of alcoholism in the home was also linked with high school completion.

While the role of cultural discontinuity continues to be debated, Moran and Fleming (1999) advocate a bicultural approach to assessing ethnic identity in Native American students. They found support for this model in a study of 1,592 students drawn from high schools located in reservation communities. The pattern that emerged from their study was consistent with observations from a previous study of bicultural identity. Students who did not identity with either their own Native culture or mainstream white society (marginalization) had the lowest scores on measures of psychological well-being. Those who identified strongly with either Native culture or mainstream society (separation or assimilation) scored higher, and those who displayed a bicultural identity, by identifying with both groups, tended to have the highest scores on overall well-being.

2.4 Psychosocial Stresses in Childhood and Adolescence

Native Americans currently have the highest birth rate of any major cultural group in the U.S. As a result the median age for Native Americans is 24.4 years, compared to 34.4 years for the general population (Manson, 2000). At the same time, they also have the highest rates of infant mortality and the lowest life expectancy. Accidents are the primary cause of death for Native American youth ages 15-24, possibly a consequence of sociocultural factors that result in disproportionately high rates of self-destructive behaviors (Clarke, 2002). The second and third major causes of death for young Native Americans are suicide and homicide, respectively (Manson, 2000). Furthermore, six out of 10 of the leading causes of death are related to alcohol. A high proportion of children are born to poor, single mothers, 42% of whom were younger than 20 at the time their first child was born (Clarke, 2002). Paradoxically, while Native American children routinely grow up with stresses that predispose children to behavioral and emotional disorders, they are notoriously underserved by health care agencies, and few children and adolescents with mental health problems, including alcohol and drug abuse, receive appropriate treatment. The lack of services is exacerbated by the historical distrust of the health care and social service delivery systems by many Native American families (Horesji et al., 1992).

Citing a prior study in which the authors estimated that "95% of Native Americans are affected directly or indirectly by alcoholism," Horesji et al. (1992) amended the estimate to state, "The authors of this article believe 100% is the more accurate figure" (p. 336). They note that many children come from families characterized by alcoholism for three or more generations, with the result that the

extended family, traditionally a source of strength and support, was entirely dysfunctional. The historic disruption of the American Indian family has generated the highest incidence of foster care placements for any cultural group in the U.S.

Alcohol has been a pervasive problem for Native Americans since it was introduced into tribal cultures. Frank et al. (2000) argue that Native cultures were especially vulnerable to the negative consequences of alcohol because tribal cultures had no behavioral norms to control the use of a substance that had been historically absent from their experience. In addition, their earliest role models for drinking behavior were white frontiersmen, who drank excessively and engaged in otherwise unacceptable behavior while under the influence of alcohol. They also used alcohol as a "tool of 'diplomacy'" in official dealings with tribal leaders, meaning simply that they encouraged the Natives to drink knowing that alcohol would interfere with their judgment in bargaining transactions. Thus, early on, alcohol became a mechanism for social control.

Frank and colleagues (2000) emphasize the importance of understanding sociohistorical factors in alcohol use to counteract the prevalent assumption that Native Americans are genetically predisposed to uncontrolled drinking. Indeed, a substantial proportion of Navajo respondents in one survey believed that alcoholism is genetically determined, a fatalistic attitude that reinforces the stereotype of the "drunken Indian." Although the effects of alcoholism are devastating in many Native American communities, most sources stress that drinking behavior varies tremendously across tribal cultures, with many alcohol abstainers as well as alcohol abusers (Beauvais, 1998; Frank et al., 2000; Kawamoto, 2001).

With respect to Native American youth, Plunkett (2000) found that when data are examined regionally, the patterns of alcohol and illicit drug use among Native American high school students do not differ substantially from those of their non-Native peers. Similar to authors who argue that structural factors are more important in predicting academic success or failure than cultural factors specific to Native American identity, Plunkett observed that the highest rates of substance use occur in environments where ethnic minorities live in relative isolation and impoverishment, such as ghettos, barrios, and Indian reservations. According to Plunkett, "In such settings, stresses such as prejudice, social isolation, unemployment, and overwhelming poverty can interact with norms of sociability and generosity to produce high rates of substance use" (p. 582).

Nonetheless, the phenomenon of alcohol abuse in Native American communities culture-specific features. Many Native Americans argue that a "crisis of the spirit" underlies the extensive reliance on alcohol (Lowery, 1998). The crisis emanates from feelings of hopelessness and despair, in effect, the same feelings that underlie the exceedingly high rates of depression and suicidal ideation among young Native Americans (Dinges & Duong-Tran, 1993). Loss of their native culture is considered to be the root cause of the crisis, with its consequent host of social problems, including alcohol abuse (Beauvais, 1998). A growing number of community-based treatment programs have integrated Native cultural components, such as the sweat lodge and medicine wheel, into alcohol treatment programs. While some professionals, advocate culturally appropriate treatment (Cameron, 1999; Kawamoto, 2001; Lowery, 1998), the alcohol research community has been reluctant to accept the notion that Native culture

and spirituality are keys to alcohol abuse prevention and treatment. According to Beauvais (1998), there are two reasons for this stance. First, non-Indian perspectives on the psychology of behavior are essentially secular and downplay the role of culture. Second, there are few valid instruments for measuring spirituality, cultural beliefs, and values for research purposes.

Beauvais (1998) noted that several recent studies focused on finding a connection between cultural identification and substance use among Native American adolescents, but failed to find a meaningful link. However, the author suggests that there may have been flaws in the methodologies used and advocates further exploration of the issue of whether culture has a protective effect on Native American youth, a belief strongly held by many tribal elders. To support this assumption, Herring (1994) cited earlier research that found that adolescents in communities with strong tribal cultures and identity were less likely to become involved with substance use than other peers. Dehyle (1992) found substance abuse to be more of a problem in the homes of the Ute adolescents, where cultural ties were weak and alienation high, in comparison to the Navajo, who had much stronger tribal traditions. Among dropouts, the incidence of family substance use was high in both tribal groups. Two-thirds of the Navajo dropouts and 92% of the Ute came from homes characterized by alcohol and drug abuse, as well as overcrowding, family fights, and unemployment. At the same time, Dehyle described most of these families as "stable" and emphasized that most parents wanted their children to do well in school, although stressful conditions may have precluded their ability to offer active support.

The conditions that facilitate substance use among Native American youth and the patterns of use have elements that are both similar and distinct from substance use among other groups. On average, Native Americans begin drinking alcohol at a younger age than their non-Native counterparts, consuming it more frequently and in larger amounts. Not surprisingly, this pattern of early onset, heavy consumption results in greater consequences in terms of accidents and physical and emotional problems (Cameron, 1999). Often living in isolated communities where heavy drinking is prevalent, Native youth are often confronted with strong peer pressure to drink. In fact, researchers have observed a lack of clear-cut familial or community sanctions against substance use in reservation communities; in a study of students in grades 7-12, the researchers concluded that the absence of explicit family sanctions against substance use was a key problem in prevention programs (Herring, 1994). Some research has reported that by 12th grade, 80% of Native American youth are active consumers of alcohol (Cameron, 1999).

Duryea and Matzek (1990) reported modest results in a pilot program that focused on peer pressure management as a strategy to prevent negative health behaviors among Navajo and Pueblo elementary school students. In support of cultural discontinuity, they suggest that the school environment may not be ideal for prevention programs in this population, although program design may be the decisive factor in its effectiveness. All sources are unanimous on the importance of peer-focused interventions; the peer group is a major influence on behavior for all adolescents and the effect is heightened in cultures that have traditionally been community-oriented. Duryea and Matzek admit that the elementary school program may not have been

culturally congruent. In contrast, the Natural Connection Curriculum was designed on the basis of input from (adult) students and integrates traditional Native values, history, and spirituality as essential components for enhancing self-esteem (Navarro, Wilson, Berger, & Taylor, 1997). Although the program was created to prevent and treat substance use in adults, the program developers seek to adapt it for elementary, middle, and high school students in Native American communities, with program graduates serving as role models and mentors. An important feature of this innovative program is conveying the message that substance abuse is incompatible with traditional tribal values. Mentoring is advocated as an effective strategy for dropout prevention as well as substance abuse prevention (Franklin & Waukechon, 1995).

Gale (1991) advocates three primary strategies for combating substance use among Native American adolescents. Although they are unique in that they incorporate tribal culture, they are based on models that have proven effective for helping at-risk youth of diverse cultural groups through the mechanism of raising self-esteem. The first strategy is the development of physical challenge program that use tribal culture and environments as the basis for challenge and achievement, while conveying the message that alcohol and drugs have no place in these activities. The second is establishing tribally sponsored chapters of national youth organizations, thereby providing opportunities for self-actualization and self-esteem-building. The third strategy is the implementation of peer support groups that meet weekly to offer students a safe, supportive, and culturally respectful environment in which to share feelings and ideas, and which serve as a forum for promoting a healthy lifestyle. In the general

student population, all three of these program models have been applied to dropout prevention as well as to the prevention of substance abuse.

The role of cultural loss in the high rates of alcohol and drug abuse in Native American communities, like other theories of cultural discontinuity, is an issue of debate. The most salient contributors to substance abuse appear to be relentless poverty and growing up in a family or community environment surrounded by heavy alcohol use (Cameron, 1999; Clarke, 2002; Horesji et al., 1992; Lowery, 1998; Plunkett, 2000). In many respects, patterns of substance use among Native American youth are similar to those reported for other ethnic groups. In general, there is a stronger connection between alcohol and drug use among adolescents than among adults (Beauvais, 1998). Health risk behaviors tend to be clustered in all adolescent populations, although most studies report higher rates of risk-related behaviors for Native American youth (Clarke, 2002). Native American youth have high rates of inhalant use, which is considered a marker for serious drug use (Herring, 1994). Research has determined that for all age groups, inhalant use indicates a high degree of drug involvement and is often associated with serious social and emotional problems. Among Native American adults, alcohol dependence and binge drinking are significantly related to comorbidity (Manson, 2000). In fact, this persistent association underlies the high rates of foster home placement for Native American children (Horesji et al., 1992).

In a study of marijuana use among Native American adolescents as part of the Voices of Indian Teens Project (VOICES), Novins and Mitchell (1998) found several factors linked with marijuana use: 1) encouragement by peers to drink alcohol, 2) positive alcohol expectancies, 3) poor academic performance, and 4) antisocial

behavior. While an association between substance use and school failure seems intuitive and is often proposed, this is the only study reviewed that reported a definitive link between adolescent substance abuse and poor school performance in Native American students. Bowker (1992) found that among Native American women, those who reported conflicts with teachers generally had other problems as well. Although the study did not explore substance abuse specifically, it adds to the body of research linking academic failure with problem behaviors outside of school.

In working with Native American women involved in a long-term recovery project based on tribal spiritual values, Lowery (1998) reported a high incidence of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse in the life histories of addicted women. For many, past trauma was also linked to the abuse and neglect of their own children, a common observation of child welfare workers in reservation communities (Horesji et al., 1992). Patterns of intergenerational alcohol and drug addiction and child abuse are common to all ethnic groups, however the relative isolation and cultural values of reservation communities and the historic distrust of government service agencies further complicate the already difficult issue of investigating child physical and sexual abuse (DeBruyn et al., 2001; Horesji et al., 1992; Schafer & Mellwaine, 1992). These authors agree that physical and sexual abuse are underreported in Native American communities, although this is generally true for all population segments.

According to Schafer and Mellwaine (1992), the geographic isolation and complexity of federal and tribal law enforcement combine to make reservation communities "safe havens for child molesters, both Indian and non-Indian, who often remain active for many years without detection" (p. 157). The issue is further

complication by the fact that despite strong cultural sanctions against the sexual abuse of children, sexual matters are not customarily discussed openly. The close ties within the community can work both for and against the disclosure of child sexual abuse; on one hand, it is difficult for information to remain secret for any length of time, but on the other, the "moccasin telegraph" precludes confidentiality and may heighten the distress of victims who are aware that the details of the abuse will be known throughout the community.

Although research has systematically reported a link between childhood abuse and later substance use, which in turn, may result in school failure, childhood victimization does not distinguish high school completers from non-completers (Bowker, 1992). Of special relevance to the present study is the fact that several high profile cases of child sexual abuse in Indian reservation communities have involved teachers, both male and female, Indian and non-Indian (Schafer & Mellwaine, 1992). A high proportion of child molesters within Indian communities reported having been molested as children by non-Indian teachers. As a result of five high profile cases on Navajo and Hopi reservations, legal sanctions were tightened and the awards from a civil lawsuit were used to implement counseling, educational, and long-term victim assistance programs. However, the problem of teachers molesting students has not been eradicated and can have lasting consequences for victims. Of particular note, a teacher involved in one of the most widespread instance of child sexual abuse in U.S. legal history, deliberately targeted children from poor, dysfunctional families, whom he befriended. Given the significant number of Native American students who fit this

profile, this pattern suggests that stringent background checks and greater awareness of child molestation are needed to protect vulnerable students.

Although Schaer and Mellwaine (1992) did not examine a direct connection between childhood sexual abuse and academic failure, the documented psychological trauma of abuse survivors clearly indicates that these students are at risk for school failure. The reported consequences of sexual abuse include irritability, low self-esteem, learning disorders, and in some cases, suicide attempts. One teacher observed that victims were ostracized by their peers and forced to form their own social subgroups. Several students expressed the feelings of isolation and stigmatization commonly reported in the literature on child sexual abuse; they felt that they were somehow "different" and were rejected by peers. These findings indicate that intervention is essential to counteract the negative consequences of sexual abuse, of which school failure is only one of a constellation of potential negative effects.

For Native American girls, pregnancy is a major cause of high school dropout. National data target pregnancy and marriage as the causes of dropout for 44% of all female dropouts in the U.S., and Deyle (1992) found this to be true for nearly half the female Navajo and Ute dropouts in her study. However, this had as much to do with cultural values as with the practical concerns of childcare. Within the tribal cultures, a young woman who became a mother was viewed as an adult and as a result, "her life moved beyond the immediate need for schooling" (p. 42). While the young mothers reported acceptance and pride within the community, they often felt stigmatized by teachers who "look at you differently" and "stay away from you," causing them to feel "out of place" at school and reinforcing the decision to drop out. In Bowker's (1992)

study, 51% of the young women who dropped out became pregnant while in high school.

Mobility predisposes students to school failure. Eberhard (1989) found the mobility rate of dropouts (2.46) to be significantly higher than that for high school completers (1.24), and the more transient the student's school career, the more likely he or she was to drop out. Mobility disrupts the continuity of education and makes classroom adjustment more difficult. Brandt (1992) identified a group of students labeled "floaters," who transferred from one school to another in search of a challenging, comfortable school environment. Although continual floating increased the risk of dropout, Brandt found that paradoxically, school completers rather than dropouts were more likely to have attended two or more different schools. This pattern suggests that committed students who feel uncomfortable in one educational setting actively seek out an environment that is conducive to their academic success. For some Native American students, transferring to an alternative school or boarding school can be a decisive factor in high school completion (Chavis, 1999; Franklin & Waukechon, 1995; Jeffries et al., 2002).

2.5 The Concept of Resilience

Resilience is a term generally used to identify students who are labeled at-risk due to sociocultural and structural factors, and who demonstrate academic, social, and emotional competence in spite of adverse circumstances (Miller & MacIntosh, 1999; Nettles, Mucherah, & Jones, 2000). Although the first study to document the phenomenon involved Native Hawaiians, most research on resiliency has focused on

African American students. A key finding in virtually all research on resilience is that resilient youth have the experience of at least one caring, supportive adult, either within or outside of the family.

Less well researched, although especially relevant to the present study, is the effect of racial identity on resilience. In a study of 131 urban African American adolescents, Miller and MacIntosh (1999) found that the presence of a strong, positive racial identity acted as a buffer against everyday stresses, including discrimination. Contrary to Ogbu's (1978) theory, the students with a strong African American identity did not act in opposition to school culture and did well academically. However, this finding coincides with the idea that a positive racial identity enables members of caste-like minorities to transcend the status imposed on them by the dominant culture and view themselves more as a voluntary minority, with goals of upward mobility. In the study of Moran and Fleming (1999), Native American students with a bicultural orientation showed the highest self-esteem, while identification with either Native American or white culture predicted higher self-esteem than weak identification with either.

In research on resilience conducted by the Center on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR), Nettles et al. (2000) found parental support to be a major factor in the resilience of African American adolescents. In fact, the authors emphasize that support from caring adults emerges as a key factor in all research on resilience. Although there were no studies on Native American youth focused specifically on resilience, Bower (1992) noted that the profiles of women who completed or dropped out of high school were not distinctively different, yet most succeeded in spite of a

plethora of adverse circumstances that placed them at risk. The most significant finding was that the young women who succeeded all reported the support of their families, in particular, their mothers and grandmothers. Those who graduated from college typically had powerful support from extended family networks. In support of resilience theory, Bowker concluded that, "There was evidence that if a girl is to be successful in school she must have a caring adult during her adolescent years" (p. 16).

Although the term resilience was never mentioned, Bowker (1992) observed that in spite of the adverse social and economic conditions under which many respondents group up, "And yet, within this setting, more than half the women in this study survived that environment, graduated from high school (and often college) and became very productive citizens within their tribal groups, and for some, leaders in their tribes and their states and nation" (p. 14). The critical factor was the presence of a caring, supportive adult. As several researchers have observed, the profiles of Native American high school completers and non-completers are not immediately distinguishable, and most Native American parents place high value on education. It appears that structural barriers as a consequence of pervasive poverty and unemployment and the disruption of the extended family leaving many young people without adult support, are the major obstacles to the academic success of Native American students. The systematic devaluing of tribal cultures by mainstream society undoubtedly undermines self-esteem and exacerbates psychosocial stresses. However, cultural discontinuity offers only a partial explanation for the high dropout rates among Native American students. Addressing the problems of poverty, unemployment, and substance abuse, and providing young people with adult support through mentoring and community-based

programs are essential for breaking down the structural barriers to the academic and adult success of Native American youth.

CHAPTER 3

FACTORS INVOLVED IN HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND NON-COMPLETION OF NATIVE AMERICANS: METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Participants

The sample used in this study consisted of male and female Native American tribal members, between the ages of 18 to 24 years. Data was collected on graduates and nongraduates. A graduate is considered to be someone who has either graduated from high school or obtained a GED by age 24. There are 30 graduates and nongraduates in the sample.

3.2 Procedures

The participants completed a demographic data sheet and a three-page questionnaire. Three settings were used for data collection. The first settings are social gatherings for Native Americans within the Phoenix metropolitan area such as Pow-Wows, social dances, fund-raisers. The second group of settings were two Native owned businesses in Phoenix. Lastly, the entry way to Phoenix Indian Medical Center's Hospital and Clinics was used to gather data. The Data collectors were two Native Americans college students and this researcher.

The data collectors approached subjects in a formal manner, and asked them, "Would you fill out a small survey to help us better understand the needs of Native people as they relate to educational goals." The participants were asked, "If you wish to leave your mailing address, you will be sent the results of the final study?." Participants

were assured of the confidentiality of their information and data and offered the option to decline to continue with the study at any time.

3.3 Measures

The outcome of interest will be that of academic achievement. This will be measured in two ways:

1. High school completion.
2. Grade point average during time of high school attendance.
3. Each person completed a brief survey that included basic demographic information followed by a questionnaire. (See Appendix A.) The demographic information and a one-page questionnaire were completed on a one-to-one basis. Participants were asked to include their grade point average if they know it at the time they complete the demographic information. There will also be a permission slip to obtain high school grades signed at this time. (See Appendices A and B.)

3.4 Statistical Procedures

There are two outcomes measures in this study: graduation and grade point average. The independent variables are the items in the survey.

Reliability Analyses were applied to the four factors in the survey: substance abuse, parenthood, mentoring, and cultural influences. Coefficient alpha was used to estimate the four scales with an expectation of 5-.6, or higher, being a potential expectation. Means and standard deviations provide for means provide descriptive analyses of the demographic data.

3.5 Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used to conduct all analyses. The analyses fall in three categories:

1. Descriptive – means, standard deviation, N's, for all variables (demographics, independent and dependent variables.
   a. logistic regression
   b. linear regression
2. Reliability analysis of constructed scales of coefficients.

There are four identified areas which were researched in the literature as most likely to be influential factors in the successful completion of high school by Native Americans.

These areas will be referred to by letters Factors 1,2,3,and 4. For future clarification, areas will be defined as follows: Factor 1 deals with questions relating to alcohol and substance abuse in High School. Factor 2 questions are related to unplanned parenthood. Factor 3 questions relate to the presence of a mentor. Factor 4 poses questions related to cultural identity. This was a questionnaire sample composed of intertribal members aged 18 to 24 years.

The study was conducted with equal numbers (30) in each grouping of males and females and graduates/nongraduates. The outcome of interest was initially identified twofold as a) High School completion and b) Grade Point Average. Outcome 1 is the dependent variable of graduation (0-1). This analysis used Binary Logistic Regression. Outcome 2 held the dependent variable of Grade Point Average. The independent variables remain the same as in Outcome 1.

Data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Program (SPSS). The analysis fell into three categories:

1) Descriptive-means, standard deviation, N's (number of subjects) for all variables (demographics, independent and dependent variables).
2) Reliability Analysis of constructed scales (Cronbach's coefficient alpha).
3) logistical regression analysis

Reliability Analysis determined the level of internal consistency within the four factors (alcohol and substance abuse, unplanned pregnancy, family/mentor items and cultural identity. In the future these are referred to in the above order as factors 1, 2, 3, and 4.

3.5.1 Factor 1

This second section identified the area of substance abuse and alcohol abuse as an important factor in the completion of high school. Citing a prior study in which the authors estimated that "95% of Native Americans are affected directly or indirectly by alcoholism," Horesji et al. (1992) amended the estimate to state, "The authors of this article believe 100% is the more accurate figure" (p. 316).

The coefficient alpha for the section related to alcohol and substance abuse is a value of .733. This is a reliability estimate of internal consistency of the items dealing with alcohol and substance use in High School. The value is moderately high and is consistent with what is expected in a sample of 60 participants using a research scale.

In other words, the questionnaire section developed for this section proved effective. This scale has done what it was designed to provide in measuring the identified area.

3.5.2 Factor 2

The reliability of the four pregnancy items initially resulted in a value of .079. This scale was too low to have been effectively measuring what it was intended to measure. Hence, the decision was made to drop this scale and it was later replaced by a new categorical variable (0 = have no children; 1 = have one or more children). This proved to be of great significance in additional statistical analysis and was very important to consider, even though it was not included in the original plan for the study.

3.5.3 Factor 3

For the section measuring mentor/family the coefficient alpha was .715. This is moderately high and consistent with what might be found in a random sample of 60 participants with a researcher developed scale. This section is found to be reliable at providing measures for the area of intended focus; hence, the results will be used.

3.5.4 Factor 4

This area focused on the topic of culture. The items of interest here are seven language and culture items, which are related to research involving assimilation and the continued experience of racism.

The area of culture resulted in a coefficient alpha of .809. This reliability estimate for items dealing with the influence of culture is high for a sample of 60 with a research scale. It was retained in subsequent analysis.

3.6 Statistical Analysis

Logistic Regression analysis was applied to the data, and it is appropriate when the dependent variable is binary. When the dependent variable (did or did not graduate) with its two values, assumptions about the distribution are different. For large sample sizes the test that a coeffiient is 0,can be based on the Wald statistic which has a chi-square distribution.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The logistical regression analysis shows that the most highly significant variable is Have-don't have children. This indicates that have-don't have children is the single best predictor of high school graduation. The variables of mentoring and culture are marginally significant.

Table 1. Parameter estimates for the logistic regression model

Variable	B	S.E	Wald	df	Sig.	(ExpB)
Have-don't have children	-5.028	1.636	9.440	1	.002	.007
Substance abuse	.800	.866	.853	1	.356	2.226
Mentor	-2.197	.970	3.555	1	.057	.111
Culture	-1.828	.970	3.555	1	.059	.161
Constant	10.641	5.997	3.148	1	.076	41814.3

The above analysis identifies those variables that contribute to the regression on the binary variable of graduation non-graduation. It is also important to be able to identify those factors that might profitably be dropped from the equation. A statistical procedure to accomplish this is a part of the SPSS logistic regression program. Please see Table 2 below

Table 2. Variables not in the Equation

Variables	Score	df	Sig.
Have don't have	37.969	1	.000
Sub-abuse	13.885	1	.000
Mentor	30.389	1	.000
Culture	.737	1	.390
Overall/Stat.	42.944	4	.000

When all four predictors (1. do not have or have children-new categorical variable replacing parenthood; 2. alcohol and substance use; 3. mentor/family; and 4. culture/language) are implemented to predict GPA, the overall test of the model is significant (F = 8.649, 4 and 34 degrees of freedom, the probability of being less than or equal to .001, from printout F).

When the same analysis was conducted with those who actually graduated, there were absolutely no students who had children in the sample of 30 in the grouping.

The remaining model and all three independent variables were not found to be of any significance. (Appendix Table F)

For individual variables in the four predictor model, only the new category which addresses having or not having children proves to be of any statistical significance.

Due to these findings, this author has conducted two follow-up analyses. The first involved the alcohol and substance abuse being dropped and culture was retained

along with the mentor/family section. This was done because the alcohol and substance abuse section was not a significant predictor in the four point model.

The results indicate that the family/mentor was in fact significant (p is less than or equal to .019) and culture was significant (p is less than or equal to .005).

Secondly, this author decided to drop the two scales regarding family/mentor and culture and found that interestingly enough, when the variable have/do not have children was used as the only predictor, the number of correct classifications of individual subjects into graduate and do not graduate categories was higher than in any of the preceding models (see Appendix G and E). This merely serves to strengthen and support previous outlined findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

What this study teaches is that we are but one tiny step closer to unraveling an enormously complex web descending from historical deceit. As a researcher, I can observe and act as those ramifications tumble out upon the youth of today; there remains so much work to be done with the potential for ongoing healing to occur along the way.

In review, the literature defines several factors which are possibly of greatest significance in helping to determine whether Native Americans successfully complete a high school education. The four primary factors selected from the literature as most significant were substance abuse, parenthood, family/mentor and culture. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine, which if any, or all of these factors are influential in affecting a Native American's pursuit of a high school education.

In this analysis only the presence or absence of children was significantly related to the grade point average (GPA), $t = -4.527$, probability of less than or equal to .001.

In the end, the influential variable that is the most significant factor in predicting high school graduation is that of having or not having children during those critical years for completing a high school education.

The current literature provides a well documented picture of the complex and often confusing culture of contemporary Indian youth today. Historically, we know that public education has greatly affected Native youth and their families. The atrocities committed in the name of education include the separation of children from their families. Randomly, children were torn from all that was familiar and placed in

federally run boarding schools. This was done in the name of civilizing a people (Thompson, et. al., 1993).

Native Americans have the highest dropout rate amongst all minority groupings. This is documented in the statistics from the National Center of Education (1988) reporting early findings of 35.5 percent of Native students did not complete a high school education as compared with 27.7 percent of Latino students and 22.2 percent of African American students. Eberhard (1989) reports that Native student dropout rates were significantly higher than those reported by school districts. The Center for Indian Education conducted a 20-year longitudinal study that supports this as well. Their work tells us that the best estimate was between 24 and 48 percent of Native American youth were dropping out of school.

It is painfully obvious in the literature that Indian children remain at a huge and undeniable risk. This vulnerable population develops much higher psychosocial problems such as alcoholism, substance abuse, low self esteem, and suicide as well as higher rates of psychiatric disorders (Dana, 1993, Nel, 1994).

Furthermore, the need for special education services is also documented as being greater. A study by Nel (1994) noted the BIA reported that 11 percent of Native American students were receiving special education services as compared with 7 percent of Latino students and only 9 percent of African American students.

The level of belonging and sense of identity within the tribe is often lost to outside forces in search of a quick fix. For the youth of Salt River, an urban reservation, as well as nearby Gila River Reservation, this often translates to a level of belonging and seeking a sense of community by shifting to externally based western values and

the dominant culture. Perhaps this is a form of rebellion while searching to make meaning of an identity and a sense of self worth.

The Salt River Reservation now literally borders one of the most upscale, wealthy urban areas in the nation, Scottsdale, Arizona. Nowhere else will you leave a reservation to find only a few miles away a lush shopping area with such stores as Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue and so forth. This could prove to be of much greater divide and potential source of strife for those who have not successfully completed a basic education.

What this generally means is a shift from holding a strong affinity with belonging to one's own community to that of the dominant culture which too often takes root in loyalty to city gangs, addiction, and violence. When children from the dominant culture attend school, for the most part, it is the familiar and customary values that are reinforced (Gilland, Hap, 1998). The lash of acceptable values has long been thought to lead to a lack of positive identity and subsequent failure to successfully achieve in the academic setting (Sanders, Daniel, 1987).

From as far back as 1992, the Indian Nations at Risk Taskforce has stated that the most important priority for schools should be to rectify the social problems that we know limit students' success. Cultural discontinuity is further addressed in a study by Wilson (1991) wherein students were bused from their reservation school after grade 9 in order to complete grades not available on the reservation school, grades 10 to 12. Of the 23 reservation students sent to complete high school, 18 of these students dropped out.

The Department of Education has released data from the year 2000 that indicates 6.9 percent of white students were dropouts while minority groupings ranged much higher; the black population ranked 13.1 and the Hispanic population ranked 27.8. Native populations were stated to be too insignificant in numbers to report. However, 1998-1999 Bureau of Indian Affairs statistics showed that of 23,901 students who began high school, only 6,469 completed to graduation. The primary factors identified cultural discontinuity as a primary consideration in the high dropout rate.

These concerns remain relevant today. The identity of Indian youth is sometimes sought within the outer culture; the shifting of value and belief systems is but one way youth may strive to deal with their own deficiencies. These nonacademic factors may well be important in helping to delineate what might assist students most effectively with the completion of useful educational pursuits.

Both the Salt River and Gila River Indian Reservations are rather unique settings, as they are nearing a land lock of urban sprawl. These types of urban reservations are quite unusual.

After spending the last several years working in the educational systems on these reservations, I have come away with several hypotheses as to why education is so devalued.

To date, only 50 percent of all the residents on the Salt River Reservation have graduated from high school or obtained a GED. Substance abuse is widely prevalent and likely is formed in some attempt to self medicate an individual's emotional pain of some sort. The previous generation was raised by parents who were forced into boarding schools and made to adhere to what the white man believed best for them.

Hence, it is this writer's hypothesis that intergenerational belief systems coupled to form a lack of mentoring to complete formal education as a means to an end. Perhaps it was seen as being a greater value to the white man and not representative of a Native American society.

While results from studies reviewed had mixed findings as outlined in the literature review section, we also must be aware of the limited amount of research available that is specific to Native Americans. A problem in examining dropout rates among Native youth is the fact that Native Americans of all tribal cultures represent less than one percent of the total United States population (Chavis, 1999).

Often we are referred to as "other" without even indicating numbers as a specific minority grouping. Jeffries, Nix and Singer (2002) suggest that the lack of consensus on dropout reports that ignore Native Americans is because of their low population numbers. Even in studies that are done on the same tribal population, in this case the Navajo Nation, Eberhard (1989) reported the lowest dropout rate at 27%, as opposed to the findings of this study support the hypothesis that the factors of mentorship, substance abuse and culture all held relevant significance as factors that are influential in the successful completion of high school. However, the scale on early parenthood did not meet criteria for reliability and hence was discarded. This author noted that the number of graduates all but one had no children. In the other grouping of nongraduates, all but one did have at least one child during high school. When analyzed both with and without the other factors, this one area was the most significant factor identified.

There is an alarming rate of 60 percent reported for all other tribes. Eberhard also reported the great discrepancies in the reporting of dropout data by various agencies. In fact, Brandt (1992) reports a range from 30 percent to 95 percent. The repeated inconsistencies in data being reported ranging from quite conservative to excessively high dropout rates merely highlight the complexities of the problem.

5.1 Limitations to the Study

The possible limitations of this study include the random number of tribal members and the fact that all data was collected in an urban setting. There was no delineation of the variable that would address reservation/rural versus urban/city upbringing. Could the cultural and familial support be influenced by the presence of said community? If one did grow up on a reservation, it is further complicated by where high school was attended and the degree to which one's culture was valued there. Whether or not there is a greater sense of belonging on one's reservation school that made it more meaningful was not specifically considered. Socioeconomic factors could further contribute to this already complex equation. An additional factor that was not included was that of familial graduation or dropout rates as they may affect the model a student is raised to assume is the norm.

There are several conclusions this writer wishes to emphasize in summary. The first being the complexity of variables reviewed in the previous paragraph. The second factor is the inconsistency in previous research finding making this area quite difficult to make definitive statements about the subject area.

5.2 Future Research Implications and Recommendations

Public educational approaches today seem to be largely occupied with meeting federal and state standards to ensure their continued funding. This momentum generally offers little focus toward the good of humanity and fostering a feeling of kinship. If we were to view a traditional Indian community, one would not find such a definitive separation. Even within the most fractured of family systems there still often exists a fragment of the old ways that provides an extension of both the past as well as the future. There exists a thread of living examples, not merely rote indoctrination. For many, there continues to exist a sense of belonging, by membership in one's specific Indian tribe or nation, and further within to an identified clan system with specific relationships to particular birds, fish, plant life and other elements of nature.

Stories are past down from elders, incorporating beings seen often as helpers and called upon in times of need, appearing at vision quests, sweat lodges, dreams, trance states and other experiences. This type of traditional knowledge and intergenerational connectedness serve today in delicately threading past, present and future.

How is it that we come to the point of this research? Factors that may influence one's completion of high school have been defined and well surveyed with reliable measures in this study. The one outstanding piece appears to be of significance in the completion of high school is that of having a child or not during that time.

There remain three identified variables that could still be explored as they relate to unplanned pregnancy that could not be explored within the limitations of this study.

Additionally, the division of rural versus urban was not delineated in this study. This may be of interest in the development of future studies.

Each of the three defined areas of significance (substance abuse, mentor/family and cultural) could be developed into questionnaires that attempt to tie belief systems about pregnancy to each of the identified areas; the research question thus becomes which factors might influence unplanned pregnancies?

An additional area would be to start researching the area of belief systems that may be connected to the acceptance of unplanned pregnancies in youth. Does this somehow tie into the value system of our culture, families or mentors? St. Germaine has noted (1995) that the cultural discontinuity hypothesis contains aspects of theories that state children of minorities have been raised in a cultural milieu that is distinctly different from the majority culture and expectations/norms they are faced with at school.

My own peers and I speak about the possibility of intergenerational grief and pain. The example of an ongoing need to self-medicate with drugs and alcohol which appears as an endless attempt to put something much larger than oneself to rest.

When all the genocide took place, when women were forcibly sterilized, did that at some level position us to produce babies as quickly as we could, despite a youthful age? As youth, if we repopulate, do we believe that at some deep, even unconscious level, that we can begin to make up for the pain of those lives snuffed out and quickly forgotten by most?

Are Indian children continuing to be placed in a "tragic paradox" in which success in one world is defined as failure in another. In many communities it would

seem that having a child while still an adolescent is somewhat of a right of passage, not an unusual occurrence by any means.

It remains a possibility yet to be explored whether a student has to choose at some level between school failure and straightened tribal identity and yet failure in the eyes of the larger society, or just the opposite being viewed if one is a graduate.

I speculate that while this "intergenerational" theory has vast possibilities, they are quite complex and will remain difficult to measure. It is uncertain if we would even be consciously aware, in any measurable form, to that which potentially connects the rate of unplanned pregnancies to the intergenerational suffering linked to the atrocities committed against us as Indian people.

5.3 Additional Future Research Implications

Implications for future research might include additional longitudinal studies tracking students who are parents. Do any of those with children graduate high school and then go to a college and/or graduate school. Currently there are only a few hundred Native American physicians with a similar number of Indian psychologists as well. When do these professionals choose to have children?

Additionally, allocation of tribal and governmental funding might best be addressed through such empirical data. Areas in need of programmatic change can be identified and better evaluated for effective service delivery as a result of said work to prevent unplanned pregnancies. Lastly, the increase in providing meaningful services that could actually enrich Native people's lives and assist them in being healthier, more

autonomous individuals by better supporting students staying in school, even after becoming a parent prior to high school graduation.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY FORM - DEMOGRAPHICS

FACTORS INVOLVED IN HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION
AND NON-COMPLETION OF NATIVE AMERICANS

All your responses are confidential and will not be used in a way that might identify you individually. Please write in your response or fill or check the appropriate bubble when these are provided.

NAME: _____

TRIBAL AFFILIATION: _____

Age: _____

Please mark your highest level of education:

(1) Did not finish High School
(2) High School or GED
(3) Some College
(4) Associate's Degree
(5) Bachelor's Degree
(6) Master's Degree
(7) Doctoral Degree
(8) Other (Please Specify): _____

If you graduated from high school, in what year did your graduate? _____

What high school? _____

In what city and state: _____

Are you employed? (Y) Yes (N) No

If yes, what is your job? _____

If no, are you actively seeking employment? (this is confidential) (Y) Yes (N) No

Please select the category that most closely matches your marital status:

(1) Single
(2) Separated
(3) Married
(4) Divorced
(5) Live in

How many children do you have? _____

How many did you have before age 21? _____

Please identify here each person who lives in your household (for example, father, husband, two daughters – whatever applies to your household)

_____

_____

_____

Please indicate your level of income by marking one of the following:

(1) Under $15,000
(2) $15,000 to $20,000
(3) $21,000 to $35,000
(4) $36,000 to $45,000
(5) $46,000 to $60,000
(6) $61,000 to $75,000
(7) Over $76,000

APPENDIX B

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND PARENTHOOD SURVEY

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with these statements about alcohol and substance use. For each statement, mark the bubble that most closely matches how you feel about it now.

Statement	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Neutral 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
My use of alcohol interfered with my high school work.	O	O	O	O	O
My use of drugs interfered with my high school work.	O	O	O	O	O
Substance abuse did not affect my success in high school	O	O	O	O	O
Regular use of alcohol or drugs is a way of life for me or my friends	O	O	O	O	O
I did not drink in high school	O	O	O	O	O
Drinking is one of the most serious problems among Native Americans	O	O	O	O	O

How often would a person need to drink or use drugs for it to be considered a problem? Please mark one of the following choices:

(1) 1-3 times per week
(2) 4-6 times per week
(3) 7-10 times per week
(4) More than 10 times per week

How many drinks would a person have in a week for it to be a problem? _____

How often did you drink or use drugs in high school?

(1) Not at all
(2) Less than two times a month
(3) Two times a month
(4) Once weekly
(5) 1-3 days per week
(6) 4-6 times per week
(7) Daily

How much do you drink per week now?

(1) Not at all
(2) 1-3 drinks per week
(3) 4-6 drinks per week
(4) 7-10 drinks per week
(5) More than 10 drinks per week

During high school, an acceptable level of drinking or drug use might be:

(1) None
(2) 1-3 times per month
(3) 1-3 times per week
(4) 4-6 times per week
(5) 7-10 times per week
(6) More than 10 times per week

Next, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements about parenthood during adolescence. For each statement, mark the bubble that most closely matches how you feel now.

Statement	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Neutral 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
A pregnancy interfered with my success in my high school.	O	O	O	O	O
It is acceptable for a baby to be born to Indian high school students.	O	O	O	O	O
Unplanned pregnancies interfere with completion of high school.	O	O	O	O	O
Most teenage students can complete high school after becoming a parent.	O	O	O	O	O

Please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about family values and cultural identification. For each statement, mark the bubble that most closely matches <u>your feelings</u>.

Statement	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Neutral 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
My family significantly influences my choices about education.	○	○	○	○	○
I felt supported and encouraged to complete high school	○	○	○	○	○
Education is valued in my family	○	○	○	○	○
My friends and relatives do not feel that I need to go to college.	○	○	○	○	○
I want a chance to prove myself academically to family and friends.	○	○	○	○	○
People can change my mind even when I think my mind is made up.	○	○	○	○	○

Who has been the most influential person in your life? _____

Please explain how this person has influenced you. Please use the back of the sheet if needed.

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with these statements about Indian life and culture. For each statement, mark the bubble that most closely matches your feelings at the present time.

Statement	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Neutral 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
My tribal language was spoken at home when I was growing up.	o	o	o	o	o
I understand my tribal language when it is spoken.	o	o	o	o	o
I speak my tribal language.	o	o	o	o	o
When I was growing up, my family lived an Indian way of life.	o	o	o	o	o
When I was growing up, my family lived more of a white way of life.	o	o	o	o	o
When I was growing up, traditional Indian beliefs were important to my family.	o	o	o	o	o
I am proud to be Native American	o	o	o	o	o

Please list what you think are the top three problems faced by Native youth today. List the most severe problem first, and the least severe problem last.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Please make any additional comments you wish about alcohol or substance use, issues of parenthood during adolescence, family values and cultural identification, or Indian life and culture here. Feel free to use the back of the page to add more.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for participating and helping your community better understand the needs of Indian students. It is our hope that this study will lead to better educational programs. All information is and will remain confidential. Only summary information will be used in results and discussions of findings. No person will be identified individually.

If you wish to receive a copy of our findings, please send a request to:

Lorrie Starr
5225 N. 20th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85016

My sincere thanks for your participation,

Lorrie Starr

APPENDIX C

SCRIPT FOR DATA COLLECTION

Approach the subject and introduce yourself . . .

Hello, my name is _____ and I am collecting information on Native American's pursuit of education. It would take only a few minutes to complete this survey and could help with support and recommendations for Native Youth staying in school. All of the information will be confidential, so your name or any other identifying information would never be released.

Ask for participation

Would you be willing to fill out this survey?

Give brief overview

If yes, present the clipboard and show first page on demographics.
This first page is just background information (show first page).
Now flip to page two – and say the next three pages are for you to show how much agree or disagree with different statements. You simply bubble in the correct response and can write more comments when you want (point to blank lines now).
This last page merely asks what high school you attended and asks for your signature to obtain a high school grade point average.
If you have any questions while you complete them, I will be right over here (indicate where you will be waiting).
Give the person the clipboard with a pen and wait for them; answer any questions as they arise. Write out notes to give the author of this study if anything unusual occurs.

Completion and Closure

When the subject has completed the forms, look them over to insure nothing was left blank. If it was, ask them to fill it in. Otherwise, tell the subject they are free to write or call the author if they want any follow-up on results. If they indicate they want this information, give them the phone number and address for Lorrie Starr that you have been provided. Thank them for participating and potentially offering insight into helping our youth complete high school more easily.

APPENDIX D

FACTORS INVOLVED IN HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND NON-COMPLETION OF NATIVE AMERICANS

Release of Information for High School Grade Point Average

I have agreed to participate in a study which intends to investigate the significance of several factors as they relate to success in the completion of high school.

Educational success will be measured by graduation. Addressing truancy, drop-out rates, or the failure to graduate from high school is the primary motivation for this research project. This trend cannot be effectively addressed without such data. One factor that will be considered is grade point average during high school. I understand that I can elect to drop out of the study, can request results of the study, and know I will never be able to be identified by others reading said study. My name or any specific identifying information will not be made public other than to obtain my previous grade point. Any written documentation will refer to my information in a non-identifiable manner, such as subject categories or numbers.

I understand what this means and I agree to have my grade point released and sent in the envelope provided to the primary researcher, Lorrie Starr.

My signature gives this approval to release this information and my participation in this study.

Name: _____ (print)

Signature: _____

Name of High School you graduated from or attended:

_____

City and State: _____

What was the last year you attended this school? _____

APPENDIX E

LOGISTIC REGRESSION

Dependent Variable Encoding

Original Value	Internal Value
Did not complete HS	0
Completed HS or more education	1

Variables not in the Equation

			Score	df	Sig.
Step 0	Variables	have_donthave_children	37.969	1	.000
		sub_abuse	13.885	1	.000
		Mentor	30.389	1	.000
		Culture	.737	1	.390
	Overall Statistics		42.944	4	.000

Block 1: Method = Enter

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	58.159	4	.000
	Block	58.159	4	.000
	Model	58.159	4	.000

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	23.480[a]	.627	.837

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 7 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Classification Table[a]

			Predicted		
			Completion		
	Observed		Did not complete HS	Completed HS or more education	Percentage Correct
Step 1	Completion	Did not complete HS	24	4	85.7
		Completed HS or more education	2	29	93.5
	Overall Percentage				89.8

a. The cut value is .500

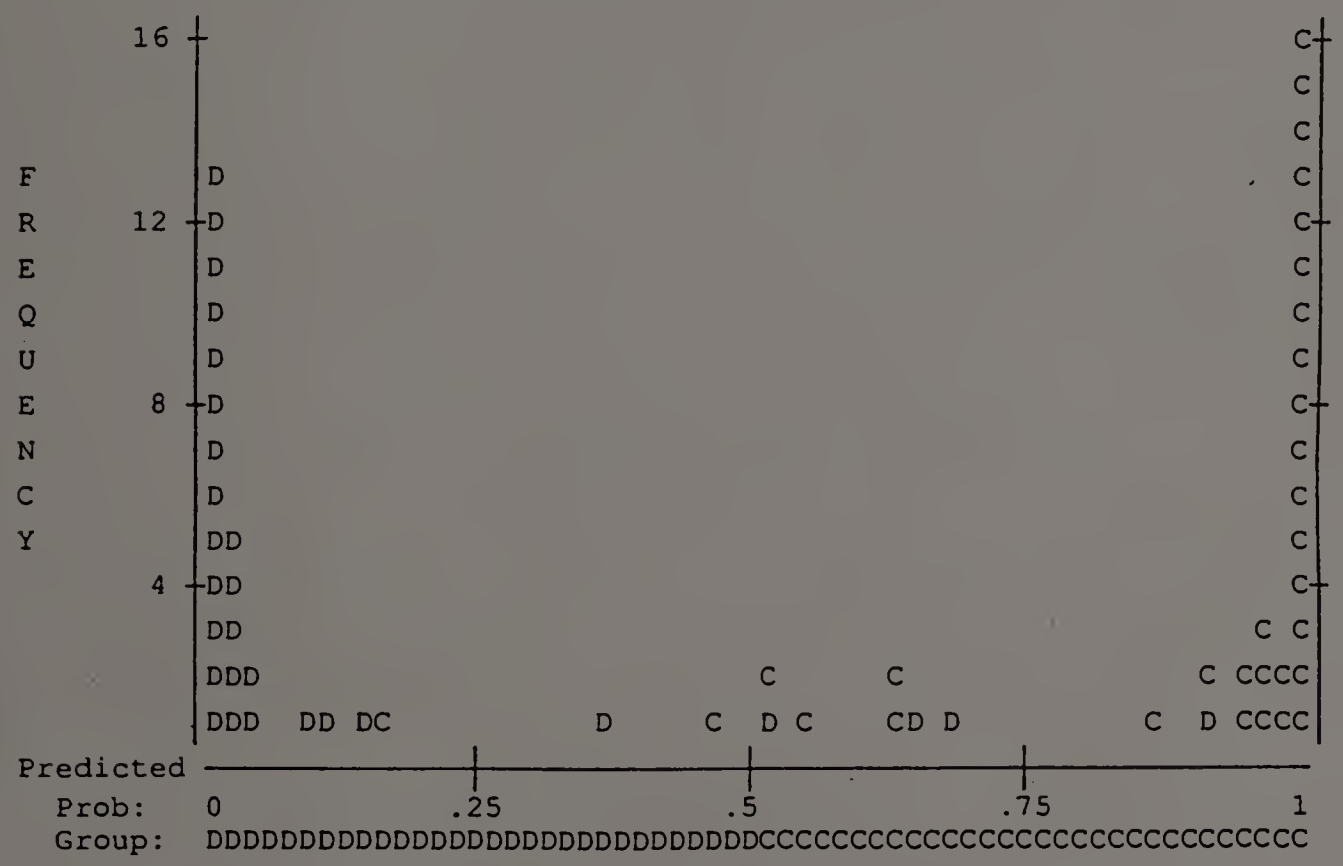
Individual Tests of Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	have_donthave_children	-5.028	1.636	9.440	1	.002	.007
	sub_abuse	.800	.866	.853	1	.356	2.226
	Mentor	-2.197	1.156	3.614	1	.057	.111
	Culture	-1.828	.970	3.555	1	.059	.161
	Constant	10.641	5.997	3.148	1	.076	41814.367

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: have_donthave_children, sub_abuse, Mentor, Culture.

Step number: 1

Observed Groups and Predicted Probabilities



Predicted Probability is of Membership for Completed HS or more educat
The Cut Value is .50
Symbols: D - Did not complete HS
C - Completed HS or more education
Each Symbol Represents 1 Case.

Logistic Regression

Block 0: Beginning Block

Variables not in the Equation

			Score	df	Sig.
Step 0	Variables	have_donthave_children	37.969	1	.000
		Mentor	30.389	1	.000
		Culture	.737	1	.390
	Overall Statistics		42.688	3	.000

Block 1: Method = Enter

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	57.273	3	.000
	Block	57.273	3	.000
	Model	57.273	3	.000

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	24.366[a]	.621	.829

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 7 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Classification Table[a]

Observed			Predicted		
			Completion		
			Did not complete HS	Completed HS or more education	Percentage Correct
Step 1	Completion	Did not complete HS	24	4	85.7
		Completed HS or more education	3	28	90.3
	Overall Percentage				88.1

a. The cut value is .500

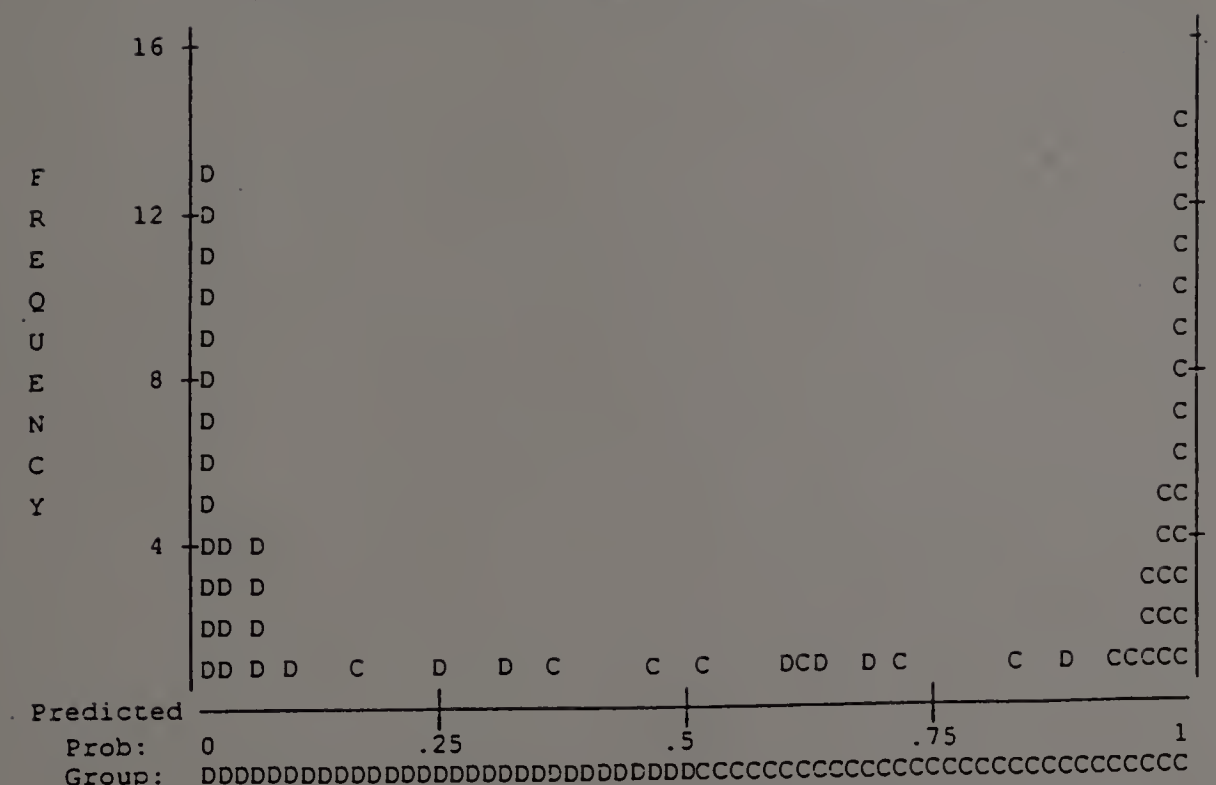
Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	have_donthave_children	-4.849	1.538	9.938	1	.002	.008
	Mentor	-2.527	1.074	5.540	1	.019	.080
	Culture	-1.787	.932	3.677	1	.055	.167
	Constant	13.670	5.037	7.365	1	.007	864734.26

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: have_donthave_children, Mentor, Culture.

Step number: 1

Observed Groups and Predicted Probabilities



Predicted Probability is of Membership for Completed HS or more educat
The Cut Value is .50
Symbols: D - Did not complete HS
C - Completed HS or more education
Each Symbol Represents 1 Case.

Logistic Regression

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	44.617	1	.000
	Block	44.617	1	.000
	Model	44.617	1	.000

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	37.022[a]	.531	.708

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 6 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Classification Table[a]

Observed			Predicted		
			Completion		
			Did not complete HS	Completed HS or more education	Percentage Correct
Step 1	Completion	Did not complete HS	23	5	82.1
		Completed HS or more education	1	30	96.8
	Overall Percentage				89.8

a. The cut value is .500

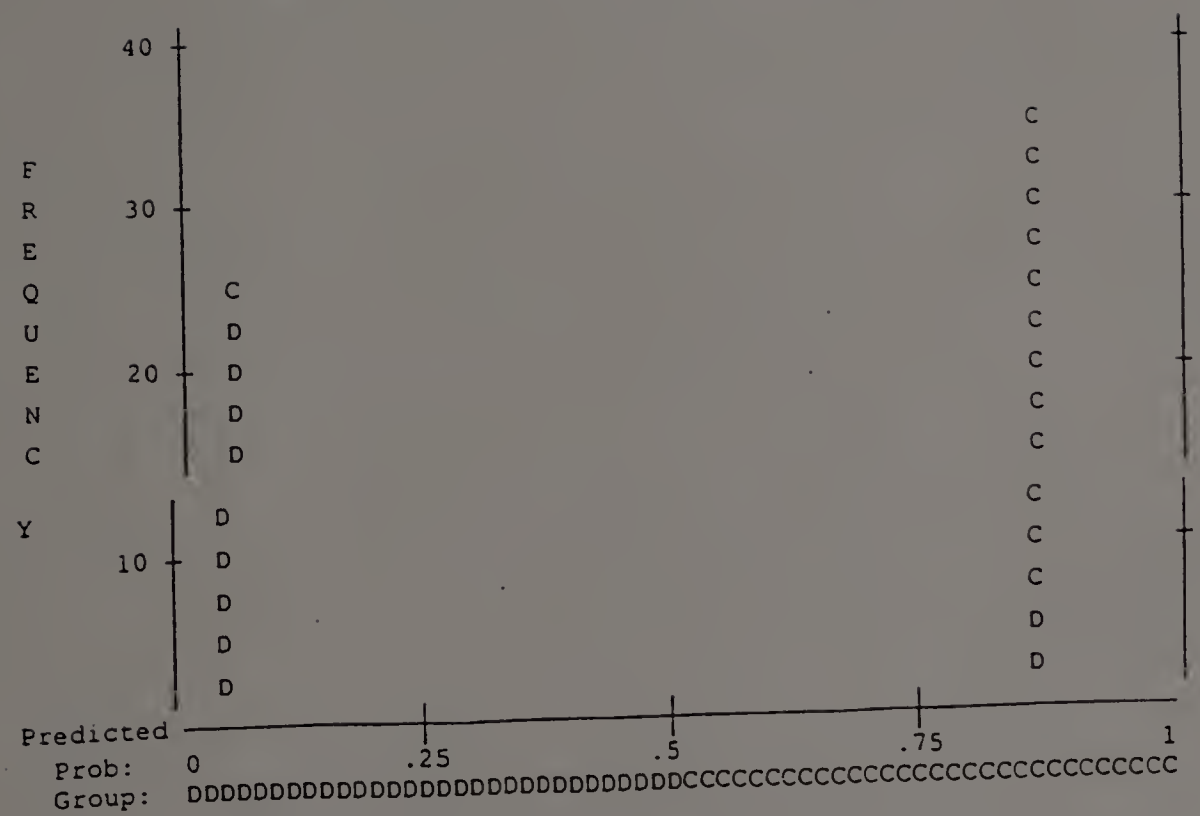
Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	have_donthave_children	-4.927	1.130	19.014	1	.000	.007
	Constant	1.792	.483	13.759	1	.000	6.000

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: have_donthave_children.

Step number: 1

Observed Groups and Predicted Probabilities



Predicted Probability is of Membership for Completed HS or more educat
The Cut Value is .50
Symbols: D - Did not complete HS
C - Completed HS or more education
Each Symbol Represents 2.5 Cases.

APPENDIX F

INDIAN SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1900-2005: A BRIEF HISTORY

Despite several waves of reform since the 1930s, the 185 federal Indian schools (64 operated by the BIA) enrolling 49,000 students "are still plagued by low academic performance rates, high absenteeism and dropout rates, and poor facilities" (Harvard Law Review, 2003, p. 1456). One in five students in a Bureau of Indian Affairs school is enrolled in special education, and "nearly sixty percent (continue to exhibit) limited English proficiency" (Harvard Law Review, p. 1457).

In the current educational climate, since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, renewed efforts have been made to make the schools accountable, increase performance, and perhaps even privatize their operation (a proposal which Indian tribes protest as in violation of a long-term trust between the U.S. Federal government and the Native American), but the problems run deeper. Some historians argue that the legacy of the Indian School from 1900 on, which worked to implant cultural shame into the Native American, planted "long-lasting seeds of doubt, which are still being fought within Indian communities" (Noel, 2002, p. 9). To many, reform cannot be discussed effectively, unless one recognizes that the original purpose of Indian schools was, indeed, to subjugate Native Americans in American society. While the legacy of the Indian schools begins with missionary schools in the19th century, the most painful and lasting legacy derives from the Indian boarding schools that still endure.

From very early days of the United States, the Supreme Court established a "trust doctrine" between the government of the United States and Indian tribes, which had signed away ownership to their homelands. Articulated by the Supreme Court in the 1830s in *Cherokee Nation* v. *Georgia* and *Worcester* v. *Georgia*, the court established a guardianship relation between the United States and the Indians, arguing

that the Indians needed the government to protect them and "supply their basic wants" (Harvard Law Review, 2003, p. 1462). The Bureau of Indian Affairs, then part of the War Department, commenced a policy, based on the principles of assimilation and civilization, to not only sequester Indians in reservations but also to then remove children and place them in boarding schools with the express purpose of "de-Indianizing" them (Harvard Law Review, p. 1455). In order to expedite this process, the federal government supported missionary efforts by Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church (primarily Jesuits) by providing funds for "clergymen to live with each tribe in order to teach religion and encourage peaceful relations with the government" (Buckley, 2002, p. 8). Missionary Indian schooling thus emerged.

Boarding schools, on- and then off-reservation, became more popular after 1865, when Congress recommended them as a better way to de-Indianize Indian children (Noel, 2002). In 1870, Congress began to appropriate money for these schools, all of them to be located off-reservation, away from tribal influence (Noel, 2002). This development was one part of President Grant's Peace Policy, which saw the acceleration of efforts to Americanize native people (an initiative that continued through the Dawes Act of 1887, which divided communal reservation property into parcels of private property, to further Americanize the land). Typical of 19th century boarding schools were those created for Blackfeet children in 1868, run by Jesuits or "Black Robes," as they were called by the Blackfeet, and whose educational philosophy was to, in the words of a U.S. official at the time, "inculcate and ingress the minds of the coming generation with the superiority of civilized life over the uncouth and precarious course of life in the wigwam" (Noel, p. 2). But, in many cases, tribes

disliked sending their children off the reservation, and would often therefore relocate to camp near the schools (Noel, 2002). This problem led educators to the idea of moving Indian children off-reservation, and even to the East so that they would be absolutely separated from their families ,but also "would be more quickly and more thoroughly Americanized" back in the East (Hutchinson, 2001, p. 3). The new philosophy also caused schools that had been previously established to educate former African-American slaves, such as Hampton College in Virginia, to take in Native American students. The most famous of the off-reservation boarding schools was Carlisle College, established in 1879 by Captain Richard Pratt, where Native American youth were subjected to "quasi-military discipline" and also, another new element of these schools, forced to work part-time, as certain kinds of work were believed to aid in the Americanization process (Margolis, 2004).

The Boarding School movement matured after the turn of the 20th century, and flourished without significant criticism until the late 1920s; from that point on, even with increasing criticism and calls for transferring authority to tribes, boarding schools survived into the 1950s and a few into the 1970s. Several social trends at the turn of the century contributed to an intensification of the negative aspects of Indian school programming. Economic prosperity brought a new sense of confidence to American culture, causing federal policy to become more imperialistic and paternalistic in tone. The creation of the Civilization Fund in 1891, with the purpose of promoting "civilization among the savages," set the tone for the coming generations of policy (Noel, 2002, p. 1). In 1902, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs explained the policy of isolating Indians on reservations as a policy designed for the Indians' good as by

segregating them the Indians could "either be under definite surveillance or be exterminated as a race" (Noel, p. 1). The idea that the Indians were an endangered species, as it were, also motivated the quick growth of Carlisle College, as it operated under the premise that "the Indians were not being civilized quickly enough to avoid extermination as a race" and that their only alternative, then, was a "speedy entrance into the pale of American civilization" (Noel, p. 3). In art and culture, too, the patronizing mythos of the vanishing race romanticized the Indians themselves. For example, in the first decade of the 20th century, it became common for Indians to dress up in full traditional regalia on the Fourth of July, at a time when their children were forbidden Indian dress in boarding schools, in order to assert their identity. At the same time, however, they understood that by doing so they were validating picturesque Anglo visions of Indians and contributed to the "ideology of the vanishing race that would keep Native people from being seen as agents of modern history" (Hutchinson, 2001, p. 9) and justify even more urgent Americanization policies in Indian boarding schools.

In the first part of the 20th century, 113 Indian boarding schools were in operation, serving 16,000 children from age 5 through 21 years (Noel, 2002). The boarding school system was expanding, even though a Congressional act in 1894 forbade sending Indian children beyond state lines (Noel, 2002), and in the face of growing criticism that the schools were too expensive and did nothing to encourage self-sufficiency among Indians. While these actions would plant the seeds to a future change – shifting over to day schools located on reservations – 1900 to 1930 were the heyday of the Indian boarding schools.

The boarding schools instituted a draconian approach to education. Far from being interested only in educating children in the three R's, these schools made it their mission to socialize Indian children into American society (Margolis, 2004, p. 75). While the academic curriculum was ostensibly important, behavioral indoctrination surrounding classroom activity began to become more important as schools undertook a "painstaking indoctrination in the basic fundamentals of white man's culture" (Noel, p. 3). As such, boarding schools are seen to be what Erving Goffman has termed a "total institution" whose purpose was the "mortification of the self" (Margolis, 2004, p. 77). Such institutions, primarily prisons, mortify the self by removing personal possessions, taking control over one's schedule, forcing one to wear uniforms, demanding haircuts, and instituting strict, quasi-militaristic rules and procedures (Margolis, 2004). Indian boarding schools operated along all of these lines, thus, as Foucault has remarked of prisons, enacting nothing less than the "transformation of the soul" of Indian children (Margolis, p. 75).

First, most of the children were forced to leave home, with 25% being compelled by authorities, and 50% sent by tribal members (Noel, 2002). By this point, it was believed that educating Indian children was useless if they would only return home "to relapse at night into savagery" in the reservations, so overnight boarding schools were favored (Noel, p. 6). Some schools, such as the school of the Colorado River Agency, went so far as to wall in the school building, so children could not go home (Noel, 2002). Once they arrived, the children had their hair cut and were dressed in Americanized uniforms (and refused the right to wear traditional dress), a fact often proudly promoted to Anglo audiences in before and after photos of new classes having

received their cultural makeover (Margolis, 2004). The students were also subjected to a peculiarly harsh de-Indianization policy: they were renamed, often simply by a teacher writing Anglo names on the board and assigning names to students who expressed a like for one name or another (Noel, 2002). School included harsh punishment for speaking in Indian language, too, and for any practice of Indian spiritual activities (Margolis, 2004). A serious attempt was made to convert Indian children to Christianity, a process that was often intensified by placing students in the homes of local Anglos for a while, to further re-educate them (Margolis, 2004). Participation in sports and bands, in quasi-military exercises, was also mandatory, to impose American views of time, organization, and order onto them (Margolis, 2004) (another feature often played up in publicity photographs of the school). Overall, then, "the explicit long-term goal of the schooling was to exterminate the indigenous culture and replace it with the disciplines, habits, language, religion, and practices of the dominant one" (Margolis, p. 73).

The fact that all of this "education" was free to Indian children contributed to the persistence of the system for generations, and, indeed, some successful Indian schools of today in fact have evolved from these older schools. But, in general, by the late 1920s, there was a growing awareness that the boarding school idea was not working. One aspect of the boarding school became controversial even as it received growing emphasis: the use of labor to indoctrinate children in values of hard work, American-style. By 1915, the labor requirements for children had become the raison d'etre for many schools to continue to operate. In 1915, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs reported that, indeed, having the Indian children do the "washing,

ironing, baking, cooking, sewing, to care for the dairy, farm, grounds, buildings" (Noel, 2002, p. 6) was what saved the BIA enough money so that they could justify continuing their operation (Noel, 2002). Inevitably, schools became something like factories, and, with a built-in low-wage workforce, often competed with local labor pools (Margolis, 2004). It was common for students to increasingly be farmed out, in a policy called "outing," to act as servants to local gentry, and by 1914, "169 girls from the Phoenix Indian School were working out as domestic servants" (Margolis, p. 91). In the increasing emphasis on work and discipline, Indian schools thus kept abreast of developments in public schools as well.

Indeed, by 1912, more Indian children went to public schools than to government schools, reinforcing the assimilation process (Noel, 2002). But this same development raised concerns about whether or not having Indian children in classrooms with Anglo children would cause Anglo children to become savage. This concern was modified by the implementation of Binet-Simon intelligence testing, which purported to show, over the next two generations, that peoples of different color had different innate intelligences, and so the less-intelligent Indian children could not contaminate the more-intelligent Anglo children (Noel, 2002). Though retrospect has shown the Binet-Simon testing paradigm to have been deeply flawed, and based on culturally biased questions (as, for example, the sample question, "What is the most important reason that we use clocks?", something an Indian child could not relate to), by 1930, "there were 50 sets of tests to measure the intelligence of people of color" (Noel, p. 7) and justify both discrimination and educational programs that, with their increasing focus on manual,

low-paying labor, practiced tacit discrimination. By 1930, there were 707 Indian schools in 24 states, both boarding and day schools.

Day schools began to return to the policy framework gradually, with the conversion from boarding schools back to day schools accelerated by a highly critical 1928 report on Indian schools – the Merriam Report – which found that the boarding-school-based Indian school system had failed to reach its utopian goal of perfect assimilation. The report also charged that the schools were nothing more than labor camps, and, indeed, the type of labor involved only prepared students for low-paying factory jobs. This change of viewpoint was reinforced by the aforementioned Binet-Simon tests, which signaled an end to the general belief in assimilation, to be replaced by a belief in science-based discrimination. Another report of 1928 – The Problem of Indian Administration – "recognized the deleterious state of Indian education" and began a process of recommending a shift of control of the schools from the federal government back to the tribes.

As a result, the overall trend from 1930 to 1980 was a shift from federal paternalism to tribal self-government (Harvard Law Review, 2003). But the process has been slow. In 1969, Congress issued yet another key report, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy*, which criticized the schools still run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as "grossly inadequate" with the schools experiencing unacceptably high levels of absenteeism and dropping out (Harvard Law Review, p. 1458). Congress reacted by "enacting legislation to increase federal funding, expand tribal control and improve academic achievement" (Harvard Law Review, p. 1456). Mutual accommodation thus became the buzzword of the day in an attempt to "reinvent an educational system"

(Gavaler, 2005, p. 1). In 1972, the Indian Education Act, also known as Title IV, was passed, providing funds for "special programs for Native American students in both reservation and public schools" (Gallagher, 2000, p. 37). These programs often focused on educating Native Americans in their own history, in effect a programmatic mea culpa after a century of Americanization and "culture cleansing" (Gallagher, p. 37). Later amendments called for schools having parent committees, to ensure tribal parental oversight. In the 1970s, as well, tribal colleges were instituted, to motivate elementary and secondary students in Indian schools to seek collegiate degrees in colleges located on reservations (Shortbull, 2003). More than any other policy reform, tribal colleges appear to have had mostly positive outcomes, though some programs are needed to expand the opportunities of graduates seeking advanced degrees (Shortbull, 2003). In tribal colleges, curricula are not acknowledging Indian culture and accommodating its viewpoints. Researchers have studied Native American thought and see that it is profoundly different from Enlightenment cause-and-effect thinking, the American sense of time, the view of the landscape and nature, and even the very concept of science and history. Also, Native American sensitivities about sharing sacred information in a classroom context, or discussing sacred material in an analytical manner are now also accommodated. It is now acknowledged that a different culture is different, and at last Native American students are being educated in their own as well as mainstream cultural values (Guilliford, 2004).

Today, there are 185 Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and 116 are tribally controlled. After slowly shifting to tribal control over the past 70 years, only now have tribes gained the lion's share of control, with the majority of schools leaving federal

control in 1995 (Gallagher, 2000). It is these schools which now struggle to meet the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act and seek to survive in an era of educational accountability. In the meantime, litigation helps to redress the harmful memories of former educational malpractice, with a class action suit having been filed by 100,000 Native Americans who, between 1930 and 1978, were "forced to attend boarding schools" where they allege they suffered physical, emotional, and sexual abuse (Margolis, 2004, p. 72). Though tribal leaders of BIA Indian Schools continue to hold the federal government to the "trust doctrine" established between the government of the United States and the sovereign Indian nations almost 200 years ago, overall it appears that the end of the 20th century has witnessed the end of the Indian school system of educating Native Americans.

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